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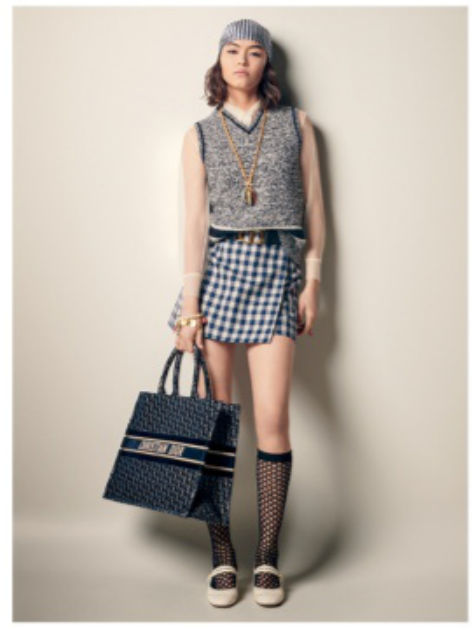
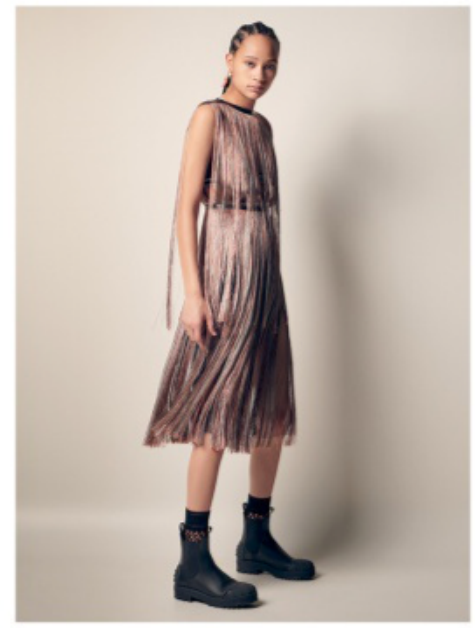

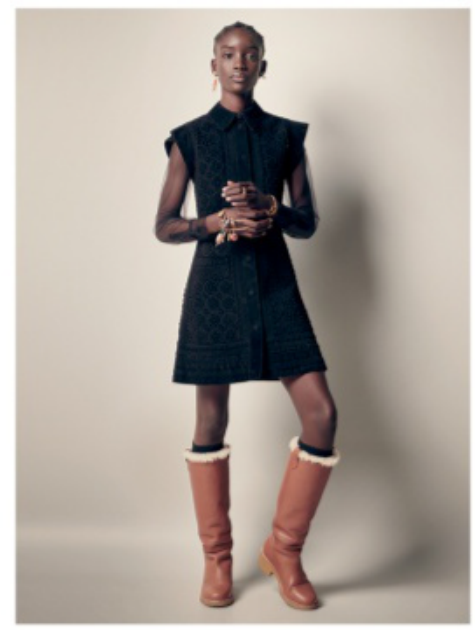

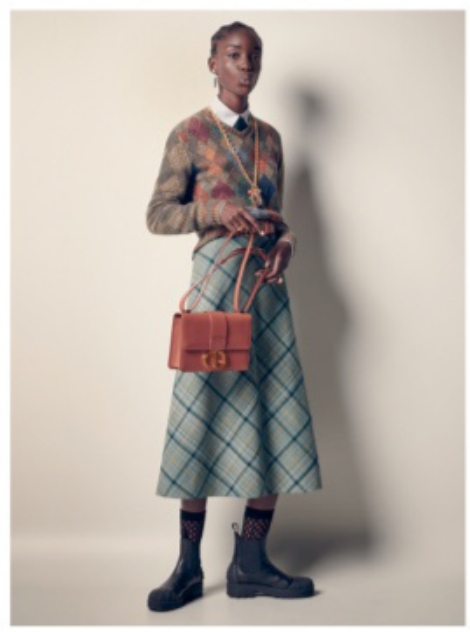

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Now Trending

1

02. CHANEL
Blurring the lines between masculine and feminine style, much like Coco Chanel herself, the Boy·Friend watch has been a favorite of stylish women and men worldwide since its debut in 2015. (The watch got its name from the idea that if a woman wears it, her boyfriend will want to steal it.) The latest iteration, the Boy·Friend Tweed, offers a nod to the fabric most identified with the house with an array of textured straps. Our pick: another Chanel signature, the black leather strap quilted with a diamond pattern—the better to complement the 64 brilliant-cut diamonds surrounding the bezel. *Watch, Chanel Watches, 800-550-0005.*

2

BYREDO MAKEUP (2): BOHMAN+SJÖSTRAND; CHANEL WATCH: COURTESY OF THE DESIGNER.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Breeze into fall with fresh takes on classic accessories and luxe new launches.

01. BYREDO X ISAMAYA FFRENCH
The iconic Swedish fragrance house Byredo branches out into an entirely new category next month: makeup. "We wanted an open-source approach to what makeup could be—a non-dictating tool to help people express emotions," says founder Ben Gorham, whose cult-favorite nongendered perfumes have a similarly inclusive spirit. Mascara, black liquid eyeliner, three eye shadow palettes, lip balm, 15 lipsticks, and 16 multiuse color sticks (shown above right) comprise the line. Gorham tapped avant-garde beauty wunderkind Isamaya Ffrench, whose repertoire ranges from subtle but odd colors to subversive, costume-like runway looks, to develop the textures and shades. "I would take areas of an image and find a color I loved," she says. "One of the pinks was from a photo of a guy in Lagos in a very pink sea." And you may do with it what you will.

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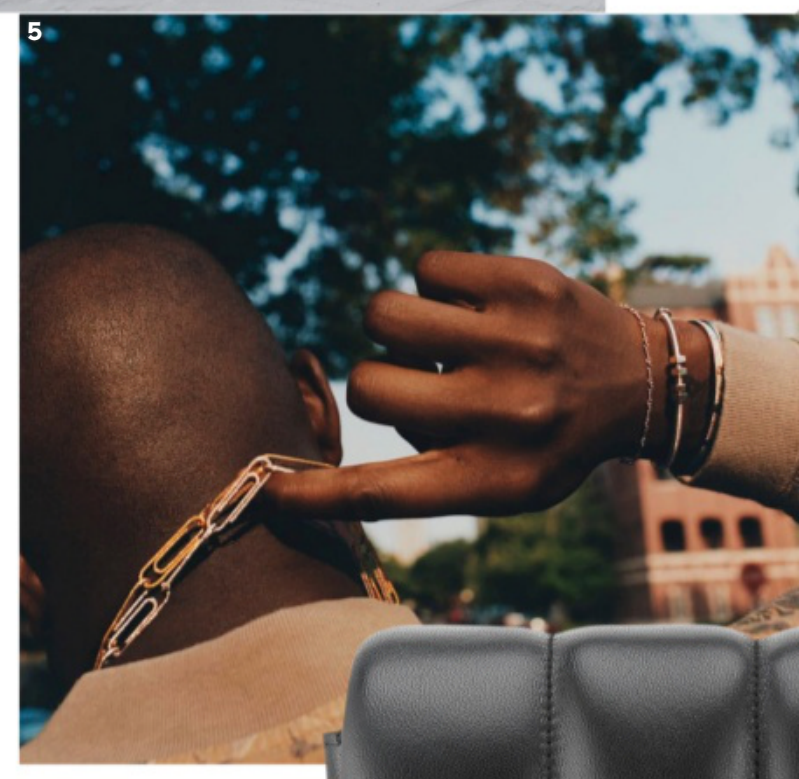
Now Trending

3

03. LOEWE
There's a new way to bring Loewe's classic luxury home. The Spanish fashion house's first home fragrance collection includes 11 scents created by perfumer Núria Cruelles, in the form of handcrafted ceramic candles, room sprays, diffusers, soaps, and, our favorite, tapered candles with a base also fully molded in wax. Cruelles found scent inspiration in the work of botanists and artists alike, including José Mutis, Ogawa Kazumasa, and Anna Atkins. Fragrances include the lush, verdant pea (left) and woody cypress (right).

04. ORENDA TRIBE
With so many in lockdown, we have seen a craft resurgence, whether that means perusing Etsy (whose stock has nearly tripled since the beginning of the year) or picking up a new DIY hobby. Some of the savviest labels around are embracing the movement—while also doing good. Orenda Tribe, founded by Amy Yeung, who spent 30 years designing for fast-fashion brands, aims to promote sustainable craftsmanship by supporting the work of indigenous artisans. Seen here: her seed-bead barrettes, even more striking in multiples.



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05. JACOB & CO. X VIRGIL ABLOH
As a teenager in Rockford, Illinois, Virgil Abloh longed for a flashy chain that was, at the time, beyond his reach. Ever resourceful, the budding designer fashioned his own out of simple paper clips. Decades later, after rising to become artistic director of menswear at Louis Vuitton, he enlisted jeweler Jacob "King of Bling" Arabo to fashion him a new one, albeit in yellow or white gold and paved with diamonds. Now fans can get their own as part of Abloh's "Office Supplies" collaboration with Jacob & Co., which includes necklaces, bracelets, and earrings in 18-karat white, yellow, or rose gold. *"Office Supplies" necklaces, Jacob & Co. x Virgil Abloh, jacobandco.com.*

06. AMBUSH X BULGARI
Still as edgy today as when it made its 1940s debut, the Bulgari Serpenti motif has made its way into sinuous rings, timepieces, and necklaces—and onto countless red carpets (worn by the likes of Liz Taylor, Charlize Theron, and Julianne Moore). This season, the Roman jeweler teams up with Ambush creative director Yoon Ahn on a bag worthy of a modern-day Cleopatra. In smooth black calf, with a tonal serpent-head clasp—only its mother-of-pearl eyes are visible—it's as dramatic as it is practical with a convertible belt strap. *Serpenti Through the Eyes of Yoon Ambush handbag, Bulgari, bulgari.com.*

6

LILY YEUNG: COURTESY OF AMY YEUNG/ORENDA TRIBE; REMAINING IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE DESIGNERS.

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a spirit of togetherness, and honors
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MICA ARGAÑARAZ
PHOTOGRAPHED BY JUERGEN TELLER

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"I have hope for a future where balance is restored and humans are not depleting the planet of resources – a future where we help each other and not just ourselves, where we see each other equally and without fear." **—Sahara Lin**

SAHARA LIN, NYC

"I just really have faith in the youth. I kind of love that there is no leader, whereas every other big movement in history has sort of been led by somebody. Part of the awakening that's happening right now is: there is no hero. You have to be the hero."**—Melody Ehsani**

MELODY EHSANI, LOS ANGELES. PHOTO: KELSEY KAY

At Nordstrom, our goal is to reflect positively in the communities, places and people we serve. With that in mind, we wanted to take some time to listen and to share some of the conversations we've been having.

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JORDAN DANIELS: MATTHEW KRISTALL; FOR DETAILS, SEE SHOPPING GUIDE.

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And here's the reward for the discomfort. Your heart will be fuller, your compassion deeper, your horizons wider and your memoir way, way, better. Before you die, make sure you have lived.

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DRESS, CLUTCH, $1,980, BOTTEGA VENETA, BOTTEGAVENETA.COM

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The Cover Looks

CARDI B wears a dress from Atelier Versace, a crystal wig from Area, and a cuff from Mordekai by Ken Borochov. For Cardi B's makeup look, try Sheer Glow Foundation, Afterglow Eyeshadow Palette, and Oil-Infused Lip Tint in Laguna. All, Nars. Photographed by Steven Klein (fashion direction by Alex White; styled by Kollin Carter; hair by Tokyo Stylez; makeup by Erika La'Pearl; manicure by Jenny Bui; set design by Mary Howard and Kyle Hagemeier at MHS Artists; produced by Travis Kiewel and Roberto Javier Sosa at That One Production).

BELLA HADID wears a blazer and blouse from Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello. For Bella Hadid's make-up look, try Backstage Face & Body Foundation, Diorskin Nude Luminizer Shimmering Glow Powder Highlighter in Pink Glow, and Diorshow Pump 'N' Brow. All, Dior. Photographed by Gigi Hadid (styled by Alex White).

TAMI WILLIAMS: CHRIS COLLS; FOR DETAILS, SEE SHOPPING GUIDE.

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From New York to Atlanta to Los Angeles, Instagram's most stylish got creative in isolation.

HOW DO YOU DRESS FOR THE OFFICE when your apartment becomes your cubicle? For this month's The Feed—typically oriented around Fashion Week street style—we turned our attention indoors and to that endless well of inspiration, Instagram, asking some of the platform's most inventive fashion creators to shoot images of their self-isolation looks. Reese Blutstein, who goes by the *nom de blog* Double3xposure, had a Zoom-friendly take on business casual: a structured cardi paired with bike shorts. Designer TyLynn Nguyen stayed comfortable in an airy slipdress, while model/artist Megan Harris upped the ante by "doodling the clothes" she couldn't try on, inspired by Area, Charlotte Knowles, and Vivienne Westwood. For more on the at-home style phenomenon, see page 92.—**NAOMI ROUGEAU**

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Editor's Letter

FUTURE REFERENCE

TOP, BALENCIAGA, $3,690. SWAROVSKI CRYSTAL VEIL, KEREN WOLF, $225.

IN THIS TIME of free-floating uncertainty, we all want to know the answer to one question: What does the future hold? For ELLE's first-ever Transformation issue, we look at the many ways the world is evolving amid COVID-19 and the widespread reckoning over racial justice. Our Front Row package examines how fashion will change when it comes to sustainability, modeling, fashion shows, and racial diversity. Consummate insiders like Donatella Versace, Maria Grazia Chiuri, Giorgio Armani, Virgil Abloh, and Gabriela Hearst are among those sharing how fashion can transform into a more earth-friendly, welcoming environment for all.

In that spirit, we've devoted this issue to "forever fashion"—the pieces that we all want to buy now, but that were also made to stand the test of time. One example: photographer Chris Colls's take on fall's graphic, color-blocked looks, which stand in dramatic, jubilant relief against New York City's quiet, quarantined streets. We also found ways to look at fashion with fresh eyes—namely, those of the 2020 graduates who shot the powerful portfolio on page 216. I feel for these kids; they didn't get to experience a real graduation of their own, so we wanted to give them an opportunity to make a grand entrance into the "real world." To that end, ELLE fashion director Alex White pored over portfolios and sent clothes far and wide to a group of talented student artists. The resulting images capture both the heartache and the hope of our current moment.

I also want to highlight several stories this month that are moving the crucial conversation around diversity forward. Magazine veteran Kahlana Barfield Brown penned a personal essay about her experiences as one of the few Black beauty editors early in her career. She often felt explicitly or implicitly unwelcome in that space, whether she was encountering microaggressions from other editors or taking desksides with companies that didn't make foundation in her shade. And in a thoughtful piece about the recent spotlight on Black authors such as Brit Bennett, Raven Leilani, and Yaa Gyasi (page 158), Roxanne Fequiere asks why it took so long for white book lovers to recognize Black women: "What becomes of Black stories that don't make the must-read lists, that languish in drafts, the barriers between them and the world of publishing too great?"

> "Black people, we're not asking for sympathy, we're not asking for charity—we are just asking for equality."—Cardi B

The majestic Cardi B, photographed by Steven Klein and channeling Salome in metallic fashion-as-armor, graces our September cover. Her style isn't just a metaphor. Cardi is fighting hard for the things she believes in: racial justice, Medicare for all, free college. Her voice—the voice of a generation, unfiltered, raw and genuine—demands that we pay attention. In Marjon Carlos's cover story (page 163), Cardi expands on what she's doing to take action and rally her fan base, whether it's getting out the vote or demanding justice for Breonna Taylor. And in her ELLE-exclusive conversation with former vice president and Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, the rapper talks about how her politics are personal. As a Black mother, she says, "I don't want to [have to] tell my kid, 'You have to be careful going to the store. Don't wear a hoodie. Please don't get stopped.'" Her message to her fans who also want change: "Why don't we make a change for real and vote?" Cardi, we'll see you at the polls.

@NINAGARCIA @NINAGARCIA @NINAGARCIAOFFICIAL

STEVEN KLEIN; FOR DETAILS, SEE SHOPPING GUIDE.

heart of the jungle

a lush green among exotic hues that answer the call of the styled

limited edition fall 2020 collection

heart of the jungle
cargo cameo
waterfall in love
don't be spotted
adrenaline brush
swing of things

essie

America's nail salon expert. since 1981.

Nina's Edit

PLATE, CABANA, SIMILAR STYLES AT MODA OPERANDI.COM

NECKLACE, RETROUVAÍ, $4,190, ETC..., ASPEN, COLORADO

BOOT, HUNTER, $150, HUNTERBOOTS.COM

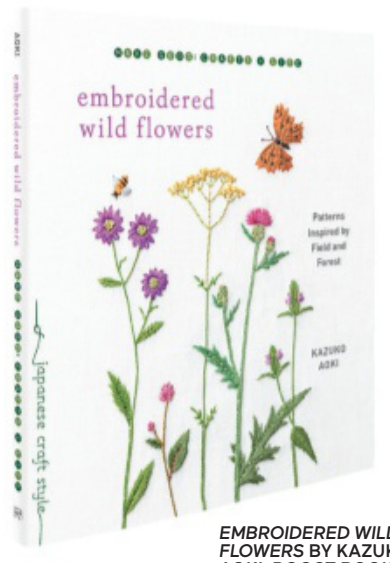
ORANGE BLOSSOM WATER, CASA FONDATA NEL 1612, $35, BUY .SMNOVELLA.COM

BITTERSWEET FLOWERLOVE BY NATASJA SADI.

COAT, VALENTINO, VALENTINO BOUTIQUES NATIONWIDE

TOP, BROCK COLLECTION, $1,860, MODAOPERANDI.COM

HANDBAG, CELINE BY HEDI SLIMANE, $2,950, CELINE.COM



EMBROIDERED WILD FLOWERS BY KAZUKO AOKI, ROOST BOOKS, $22, ROOSTBOOKS.COM

GARDEN PARTY

ELLE's editor-in-chief embraces her green thumb with botanical motifs that look just as good outside the garden.

FACE MASK, ARAKS, $40, ARAKS.COM

PLANTER, BIRCH LANE, $45, BIRCHLANE.COM

TABLE LAMP, ATELIER VIME, $615, CUTTER BROOKS.COM

HAND-PAINTED GLASS, $200, CARAFE, DIOR MAISON, AVAILABLE BY SPECIAL ORDER, 800-929-DIOR

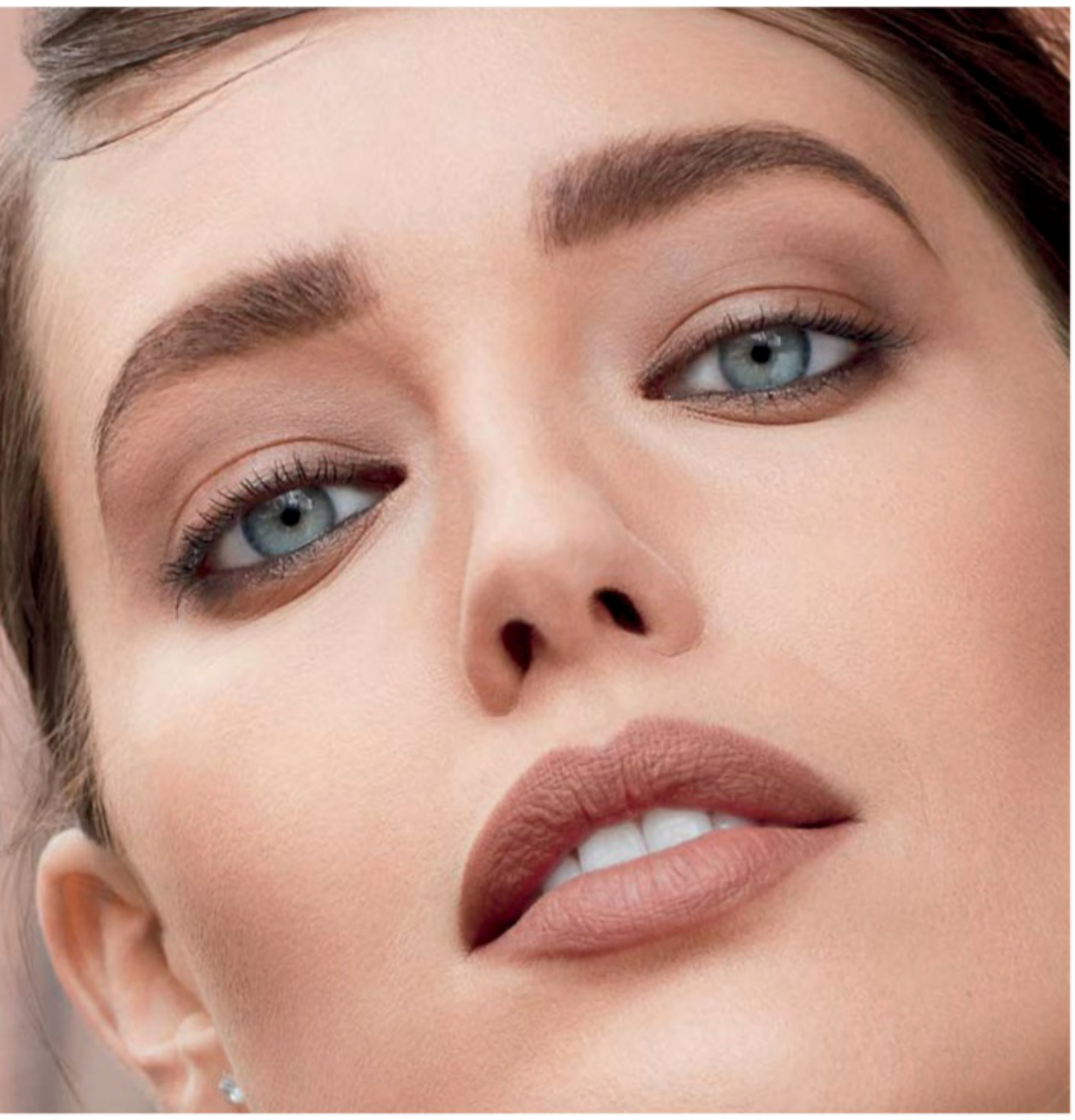
BITTERSWEET FLOWERLOVE BY NATASJA SADI: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST; REMAINING IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE DESIGNERS AND SHOPS.

PRESENTED BY MAYBELLINE

THINK THICK

A One-Step Boost for Your Brows

Brows—they've anchored our beauty looks through thick and thin. But now that beautiful, natural-looking brows are here to stay, **Maybelline Brow Extensions** is makeup's new MVP. With this breakthrough fiber pomade crayon, you're one step away from brows that wow.



"I love how **defined and natural** my brows looked after using *Maybelline Brow Extensions Fiber Pomade Crayon* . . . This brow product filled in my eyebrows and made them look thick in a natural way."

ANNA, NJ

BROW KNOW-HOW With just a few upward strokes, this smart stick instantly transforms brows. Instead of simply filling in like traditional pencils, *Maybelline Brow Extensions* adheres to individual hairs to build and thicken as it colors. Available in six matte shades for a lush, natural look.

"This now has a spot in my purse next to my mascara and lip gloss. . . **an essential part of my daily beauty routine.**"

JESSICA, CA

"I've tried other products; they were messy, smeared and brows did not look full and groomed. The pomade crayon delivered **full, thicker groomed brows. . .** and maintained a polished brow!"

LAURA, FL

"**Love the creamy texture** and how easy it blends in with my brow line. Defines my eyes like never before! Love it!"

NICOLE, KY

VISIT MAYBELLINE.COM TO BUILD YOUR BEST BROWS.

*Based on a survey of 201 ELLE/Harper's BAZAAR opt-in print/digital subscribers age 18+ interested in having "thicker/fuller" eyebrows and who use any brow makeup 2+ days per week and who tried a free sample of Maybelline Brow Extensions Fiber Pomade Crayon over a 1-week period.

THE

BAG

T is for Tod's—and for Timeless, the brand's latest cross-body, in a petite size that doubles as a clutch. *Handbag, Tod's, $1,675, tods.com.*

COURTESY OF THE DESIGNER; FOR DETAILS, SEE SHOPPING GUIDE.

MAYBELLINE®
NEW YORK

INSTANTLY THICK: BROW EXTENSIONS IN A STICK!

NEW
BROW EXTENSIONS
Fiber-Packed Pomade Crayon
A first for thicker-looking brows.

Before After

Emily is wearing Medium Brown.

©2020 Maybelline LLC.

New Arrivals

THE

WATCH

With its Panama-weave band, Cartier's limited-edition La Demoiselle timepiece, inspired by Brazilian aviator Alberto Santos-Dumont, is a call to adventure. *Watch, Cartier, by appointment only, 800-CARTIER.*

COURTESY OF THE DESIGNER; FOR DETAILS, SEE SHOPPING GUIDE.

THE

BOOT

Wade into the season with Dior's high-fashion take on the utilitarian coastal classic. *Ankle boot, Dior, 800-929-DIOR.*

302 FINE JEWELRY
14K YELLOW GOLD MOBILE EARRINGS, $875,
302FINEJEWELRY.COM/FALLSHOP

PRESENTED BY
302 FINE JEWELRY

THE FALL SHOP

There's no better time to up your earring game than now, when your colleagues are constantly seeing you from the shoulders up. Pick a pair that's unique but not distracting: Both architectural and fluid, these 14K gold double-jointed pendulum danglers from 302 Fine Jewelry's Utility collection move with you, adding both individuality and energy to your look. Wear with any Zoom shirt and proceed to make money moves.

PHOTOGRAPHER: DON PENNY, STYLIST: MIAKO KATOH

Front Row

WHERE DOES FASHION GO FROM HERE?

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the industry to reflect on what needs to change, and the Black Lives Matter movement only intensified that urgency. We spoke to designers, activists, models, and sustainability pioneers about finding a path forward that respects the planet and ensures inclusion for all.

COLLAGE BY MAXWELL N. BURNSTEIN.

COLLAGE SOURCE IMAGES: JANE KIM/COURTESY OF OSCAR DE LA RENTA; VICTOR VIRGILE/GAMMA-RAPHO/GETTY IMAGES. (2)

What Industry Insiders Think

We asked 16 experts how they believe the industry will change—and how it needs to.

Indya Moore
MODEL AND ACTOR

"I'm interested in [seeing] fashion evolve, to go past the romanticizing of white women and whiteness. I think we need to move forward, and I don't think white folks really see this happening, but Black and brown folks do. Dark-skinned Black trans women and femmes, and folks who are watching fashion shows and never get the chance to see themselves, know this. It's often extremely homogeneous, and if there are POC, it's one or two. Fashion shows seldom reflect what humanity looks like. Why would you invest in someone who doesn't see you or doesn't want to see you? How can the fashion industry deconstruct all the ways in which we continue to romanticize one kind of look or one kind of complexion? I think that the way we can make fashion more interesting is by [representing] everybody who participates in fashion."

Donatella Versace
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER, VERSACE

"The emotion of a fashion show cannot be replaced digitally, that's for sure. I don't think you can 'visit' emotion from your laptop—that's impossible. I will go back to a traditional show, I think, but I'm going to put a little bit more technology in. It will be a mix."

Virgil Abloh
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, LOUIS VUITTON MENSWEAR; FOUNDER, OFF-WHITE

"If we cut everything in half—the size of the collections, the length of the fashion week, the number of designers showing, the scale of the shows—it seems like it would [alleviate] the excesses of the industry: So much stuff goes on sale, and there's never enough time on the schedule. Because of this, many collections are driven by marketing, forecasting, and numbers rather than designers and creativity."

Maria Grazia Chiuri
CREATIVE DIRECTOR, DIOR

"Slowing down right now does not mean denying the value of fashion, nor does it mean missing out on anything. That goes for clothes and objects in general, but also for their corollaries, like fashion shows, presentations, editorials, and exhibitions, which go hand in hand with fashion. A more mindful relationship with time, and a more direct connection with what people want and need: That's what it will take for the fashion industry to keep its relevance in society and consolidate its role as a touchstone of contemporary culture."

Jeremy Scott
CREATIVE DIRECTOR, MOSCHINO/JEREMY SCOTT

"What do people need when things are bad? They need optimism. They need joy. They need a reason to want to go on. They need a reason to smile. They need something that puts joy into their heart and hopefully puts it into others'. These are the truths that I hold self-evident; they are my Founding Fathers' decree: to give something that is strong, that is emotional, that is personal, that sparks joy—to take the phrase from Marie Kondo."

Gabriela Hearst
DESIGNER AND FOUNDER, GABRIELA HEARST

"If you're a person or a company and you're in a position to help [be more sustainable], you must. It's no longer a choice. Everybody is so quick to judge the errors of others instead of celebrating their efforts. One has to try and know that it's okay to make mistakes. I've made a ton along the way, and I just go back to the drawing board. There's this notion that being environmentally friendly is more costly, but it's not; it all comes down to waste."

Can the Sustainability Movement Sustain Itself?

"WHEN IT COMES TO ENERGY, we need to look to the future, and when it comes to garments, into the past," Gabriela Hearst said at a preview of her fall 2020 collection in February, a month before the world, and the industry, got turned upside down. Eco-pioneers like Hearst and Stella McCartney have been calling on the industry to follow their lead for some time now. But with widespread cost-cutting measures in the wake of COVID-19, it remains to be seen if the industry can maintain its commitment to greener production, and if eco-friendly habits like upcycling, resale, and clothing rental will suffer as a result of fears about spreading the virus.

Fashion consultant Robert Burke predicts such innovations aren't going anywhere. "Younger generations," he says, "are looking for sustainability, non-mass-produced goods, and uniqueness," so they probably won't be giving up their Depop habit anytime soon. "The sort of hedonistic luxury that was already feeling old to me before the pandemic is definitely over now," Hearst says. "I'm certain that there will be a return to craft and quality."

As for what designers can do, "there's a misconception that 'sustainable' equals 'expensive,'" Hearst says. "But it's quite the opposite: It's about minimizing waste."

"For years, fashion has been allowed to carry on without any accountability for the environment or human rights," adds Céline Samaan, founder and executive director of sustainability literacy nonprofit Slow Factory Foundation. "The public now demands more. The only way forward is education, radical transparency, and accountability at the intersection of environmental impact and human rights." McCartney is equally passionate, calling this moment a turning point. "We cannot have sustainability without solidarity," she says. "We are seeing that there's hope—and what we can accomplish when we rise up together."

MOORE: PASCAL LE SEGRETAIN/GETTY IMAGES; VERSACE: ANTHONY HARVEY/SHUTTERSTOCK; ABLOH: LEXIE MORELAND/WWD/SHUTTERSTOCK; HEARST: STEPHEN LOVEKIN/SHUTTERSTOCK; CHIURI: ALBERTO PIZZOLI/GETTY IMAGES; SCOTT: TODD WILLIAMSON/GETTY IMAGES; MODELS: COURTESY OF THE DESIGNERS.

MODELS: COURTESY OF MARC JACOBS; ARMANI: STEPHANE CARDINALE/CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES; HARDISON: JACOPO RAULE/GETTY IMAGES; MCCARTNEY: SOUL BROTHER/SHUTTERSTOCK; KIM AND GARCIA: MATT BARON/SHUTTERSTOCK; JAMES: STEPHANE CARDINALE/CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES; BART: ANNA WEBBER/GETTY IMAGES.

How Will Modeling Change? A model, model advocate, and agency president weigh in.

INDYA MOORE HAS BEEN GETTING CREATIVE. The model and *Pose* star has been turning laundry bins, chairs, and pieces of Styrofoam into makeshift camera stands to shoot socially distanced campaigns. Moore is just one of many models who've become their own photographer, stylist, and/or glam team during the lockdown. Moore has enjoyed the creative freedom, but has also felt sudden pressure to present a backdrop that's on-brand, stressing about not being "in an aesthetically fashionable quarantine space."

It's easy to romanticize modeling as a career, but many models are living paycheck to paycheck, just like any other gig workers. Sara Ziff, founder and executive director of the Model Alliance, is helping guide them through these strange times, whether that's making sure they're receiving adequate compensation for the many new skills they've been required to master, or helping them file for unemployment. A survey the group conducted with Cornell's Worker Institute earlier this year found major financial gaps between respondents of color and their white peers. "Black respondents, in particular, were far more likely to say that they wouldn't be able to cover their basic needs without [new] income," Ziff says.

The question of inclusion also looms with regard to runway shows and photo shoots, whenever those return in their non-socially-distant form. It's just as crucial for those working behind the camera as it is for those in front of it, says Ivan Bart, president of IMG Models & Fashion. "When a model is on set, I think it's important for them to see people with shared experiences, to see themselves. Our part is to sign Black talent, [promote] visibility, and absolutely focus on equity in pay." Says Moore: "I hope that fashion designers and creators are taking the time right now to learn about real folks' circumstances, so they understand why it's so important to represent these people on their runways and in their brands. Fashion can change in so many ways, but one way that it hasn't changed is in its representation; it's always one or two Black people. Not seeing myself on a runway for so many years, not seeing myself in media, not seeing myself anywhere? It really makes you question your self-worth."

Giorgio Armani

CHAIRMAN, CEO, AND GENERAL MANAGER, GIORGIO ARMANI

"The good thing is that we are now beginning to understand what true luxury is: the freedom to walk outside, to travel, to see our friends and loved ones. In this context, we may well have a very different attitude toward luxury goods in the future. We may appreciate the simple things in life more, and so when we come to purchase items, we may well do so more thoughtfully, with more consideration—and appreciate them all the more for it."

Ivan Bart

PRESIDENT, IMG MODELS & FASHION

"On the side of fashion events and fashion shows, it's exciting: 'The show's about to start!' We all want to get back there. Everybody does. The idea of the live event and the excitement of live models, walking in clothes, seeing how the clothes actually move...that's not going to go away."

Aurora James

FOUNDER AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR, BROTHER VELLIES; FOUNDER, 15 PERCENT PLEDGE

"I hope we continue to [evaluate] our supply chain, how we are treating the people we work with, and what imagery we are putting out. Oftentimes, it has been rooted in trying to make women feel less than. We should try to focus instead on having women feel like the best versions of themselves."

Bethann Hardison

FASHION ACTIVIST AND FORMER MODEL

"[When I ran my modeling agency], I was very good at being able to reverse the conversation. If an editor from, say, *Brides* magazine called me up for one of her usual favorite girls, I'd say, 'You do realize Black people also get married?'"

Stella McCartney

CREATIVE DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER, STELLA McCARTNEY

"I am always hopeful. I really hope that coming out of the pandemic will bring us all a stronger sense of values. Sustainability should be a major focus. Fashion is one of the most polluting industries in the world. For the first time in history, during this pandemic, we can really measure the damage that has been done by human activity. The change is not going to come from just us as an industry, but also from consumer behavior—it can be our gift to the planet."

Laura Kim and Fernando Garcia

CO-CREATIVE DIRECTORS, OSCAR DE LA RENTA AND MONSE

GARCIA: "I've seen when brands have a product sitting in the store that looks like it was designed by someone who was exhausted. A customer knows when you've created something with a smile on your face. You can feel the energy in clothes when they are designed with the proper amount of time."

KIM: "There's material sustainability, but also, my team: Their energy can't sustain [a frenetic] workload. I think it's about focusing on what we love to do and what's right for the brand."

Leading the Charge
How the industry is championing designers of color and working to create lasting change.

"I LEARNED PRETTY EARLY ON that press doesn't pay the bills," says Harlem's Fashion Row founder and CEO Brandice Daniel. "I knew I needed to do something that would actually give financial opportunities to designers of color." Daniel founded the initiative in 2007 to create an equal playing field for Black and Latinx designers, staging fashion shows and providing networking and mentorship opportunities. "We've been doing the work for 13 years," says Daniel, who launched the Icon360 fund under the HFR umbrella this past May to benefit designers impacted by COVID-19. When ELLE spoke to her early in the summer, she was thrilled to have just raised $15,000 through a virtual fundraiser, featuring panelists like Christopher John Rogers. In June, the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) added another $1 million to that tally through its Common Thread Fund.

Under Daniel's leadership, some of the industry's most shameful statistics have come to light—including that, per HFR, less than 1 percent of designers sold in major retail stores are people of color. It's a figure that Brother Vellies founder and creative director Aurora James was all too aware of when she devised the 15 Percent Pledge. "I was talking with a friend about the struggles Black-owned businesses are having during the pandemic," she says. "At least 40 percent of them will not survive. That both tore me up and inspired me." To date, Sephora, Rent the Runway, and West Elm are among those to have signed on to the pledge, which urges major retailers to allocate 15 percent of their shelf space to Black-owned businesses (nearly the same percentage of the U.S. population that Black people represent).

Other industry heavy hitters have opened their wallets to ensure that up-and-coming fashion students of color get the support they need. For example, Gucci partnered with the CFDA to provide $20,000-per-year four-year scholarships and mentorships to two students: California native Ajai Kasim, who is headed to Parsons School of Design; and Kaya Ugorji of Washington, DC, who will attend the Fashion Institute of Technology.

Reflecting on the state of affairs in the industry and beyond, fashion activist and former model Bethann Hardison looked back to the '70s, when she began her career. "I started out in the garment district," she says. "There was no talk of race, only whether or not you could do the work." A turning point for her was when Bernadine Morris, then fashion editor of the *New York Times*, devoted a major feature to Hardison and other Black models: "We were so proud, and then *Newsweek* followed up with a story about how successful so many Black models had become." While there is ample room for progress, she says, it's important to reflect on those who paved the way. "I think you have a calling, and you just call things out along the way, but you don't necessarily start doing that until it's time. Well, we have a movement now, and we've all got to keep up with the movement."

A LOOK FROM AURORA JAMES'S LINE, BROTHER VELLIES.

BACKSTAGE AT CHRISTOPHER JOHN ROGERS FALL 2020.

BROTHER VELLIES: COURTESY OF THE DESIGNER; CHRISTOPHER JOHN ROGERS: SONNY VANDEVELDE.

What Will Fashion Shows Look Like?
From 3-D avatars to drive-in screenings, there's no shortage of inspired alternatives.

SHORTLY BEFORE FEARS OF COVID-19 swept through this spring's Fashion Week, fashion show production maestro Alexandre de Betak was already reexamining his business model. Famous for his transporting work for the likes of Dior, Rodarte, and Jacquemus, de Betak released a statement declaring that shows must be smaller, more sustainable, and more digital. The pandemic only sped up those mandates. "Due to environmental concerns, my current focus is on testing new digital platforms," de Betak says. "But by next year, we'll be pretty happy to have experiences again, albeit more intimate [ones]."

The question of what those reimagined shows will look like is one that has been bedeviling the entire industry—and has accelerated existing conversations about changing the fashion show system. Between the carbon footprint of international travel, elaborate single-use sets, and a calendar many designers feel doesn't make sense, the status quo could use some improvement. In Milan, Gucci's Alessandro Michele has announced that he is permanently abandoning the traditional schedule, while in New York, Michael Kors, Tom Ford, and Ralph Lauren have bowed out of showing during the regular NYFW schedule. (Paris Fashion Week is, by and large, going ahead as planned as of press time.)

Some of the most innovative ideas are emerging from younger talents who are keen to embrace new technologies and less tied to the idea of a traditional show. Anifa Mvuemba held her recent show for her line, Hanifa, virtually via Instagram Live: The garments appeared in 3-D, moving across the screens of tens of thousands of viewers, as if worn by invisible models. And instead of holding a show in the fall, Pyer Moss's Kerby Jean-Raymond will screen a documentary, *American, Also,* at a drive-in theater.

Others feel that fashion shows as we know them are, in the long run, here to stay—albeit with some changes. Giorgio Armani was one of the first to spring into action in February, eschewing physical guests at his show and quickly switching to a digital format. "I believe that there will always be a place for a performative approach to fashion, where you show your work to the world. What form that takes, ultimately, is the question here," the designer says. "Going fully virtual is not a good solution, I think.... What I am sure of is the need to do less and to do it better. In the future, I believe that brands will think carefully about staging lavish events unless there is a genuine reason for doing so."

Brandice Daniel
CEO AND FOUNDER, HARLEM'S FASHION ROW AND ICON360

"Companies must make sure they're committing to long-term, measurable [diversity] solutions, because that is the only way we're really going to move the needle forward and make sure we're not still having a conversation about representation 20 years from now."

Brandon Maxwell
CREATIVE DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER, BRANDON MAXWELL

"I don't know if it's right to call it a 'gift' I've given myself during this time, but I've made a point of not pushing myself, because I'm not ready to do so. This is a mentally challenging time for everyone, which I need to process in order to decide how I want my work and story to evolve. [I'm fortunate to] have a studio in my house, so I've made some clothes when I've felt inspired, but I've not overly challenged myself to understand how things might look come September."

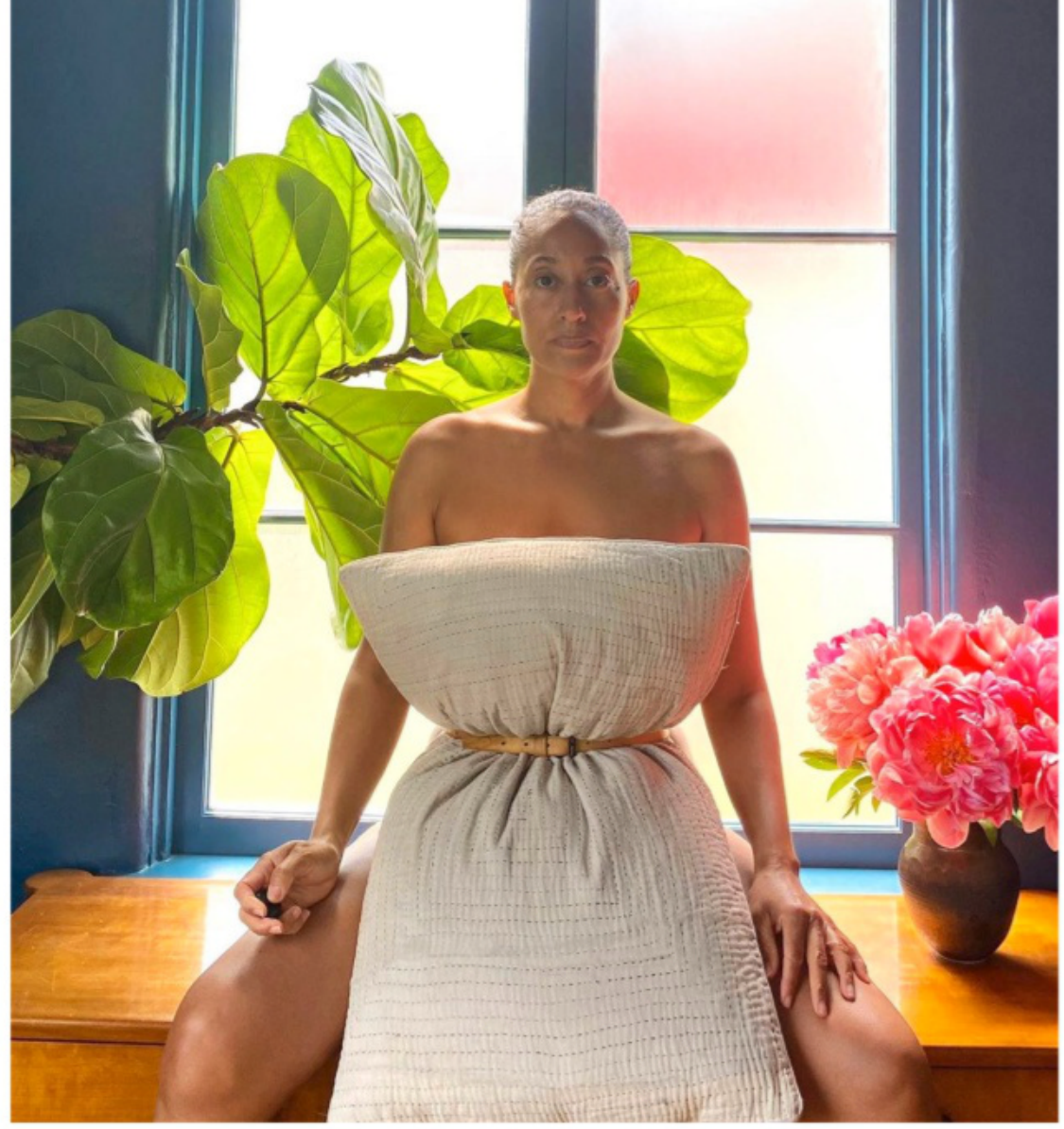
Robert Burke
RETAIL CONSULTANT

"[Customers] will be more selective when it comes to their consumption. Aside from quality and longevity, they are looking for values like sustainability, and also the corporate values of the brands."

COLLAGE BY MAXWELL N. BURNSTEIN. SOURCE IMAGES: COURTESY OF DRIES VAN NOTEN. DANIEL: VITTORIO ZUNINO; MAXWELL: DIMITRIOS KAMBOURIS/GETTY IMAGES; BURKE: COURTESY OF THE SUBJECT.

In Isolation, We're Finally Dressing for Ourselves

Social distancing has given way to a haute-deranged aesthetic that's pushing the boundaries of personal style.



TRACEE ELLIS ROSS MADE A HOUSEHOLD STAPLE LOOK LIKE HAUTE COUTURE WHILE PARTICIPATING IN THE AT-HOME X#PILLOWCHALLENGE.

Over the past few months, I have cultivated a style perhaps best described as *The Big Lebowski* meets Auntie Mame. After stay-at-home orders removed any semblance of a routine, I turned to piling on odd, clashing garments, as if I were starring in a one-woman, millennial version of *Grey Gardens*. I may not be a distant cousin of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis's living in a crumbling manor, but the sheer loopiness of the way I've chosen to dress feels fitting in a world where a viable conception of "normal" no longer exists.

I'm hardly the only fashion enthusiast who has turned to incongruous outfits to get through trying times. The Instagram account @wfhfits (Working From Home Fits), where people submit images of what they're wearing to, yes, work from home, has amassed over 24,000 followers for its haute-deranged aesthetic. Among those featured are individuals—including Diane Keaton and Henry Rollins—flaunting extraterrestrial sunglasses, marabou-trimmed pajamas, and lacy vintage slips. If the words of RuPaul—"You're born naked, and the rest is drag"—are any indication, people have dropped the facade of straitlaced convention and embraced dressing for themselves.

The painter Jeanine Brito has used the stay-at-home imperative as an opportunity to prance around the house in flouncy taffeta ball gowns with jeans underneath. "On Zoom calls for work, it's become a meme that I'm always wearing some sort of prom dress," she says. In the Before Times, Brito loved acquiring beautiful dresses but rarely found occasions to wear them. "It feels like there are no more occasions," she says, "so why not wear them now?"

A similarly wacky spirit animated the hashtags #MetGalaChallenge and #PillowChallenge, in which household objects like newspapers and bedsheets, or belted pillows, respectively, were repurposed into faux-couture dresses. As with WWII "ration recipes," in which baked peanuts were touted as an alternative to meat, and gelatin stretched one pound of butter into two, these screwball competitions may help satiate the desire for high-stakes fashion drama while the red carpet is on hiatus.

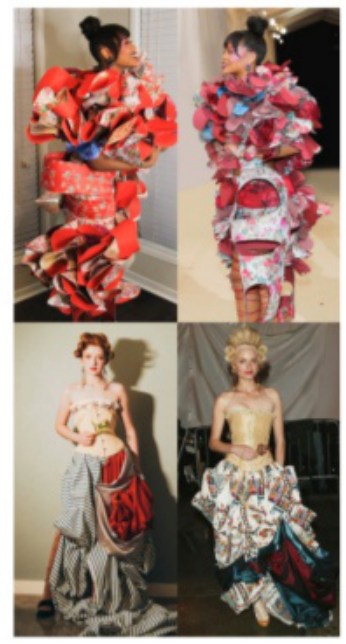
All of this newfound maximalism comes hand in hand with comfort. "Historically, most crises, like world wars or depressions, have exaggerated the trends that were occurring before the event happened," says Valerie Steele, the director and chief curator of The Museum at FIT. Which means athleisure may finally triumph in the steady battle of attrition it has been waging against traditional dress codes for the last decade. Now that people delineate between "hard pants" and "soft pants," the rigid confines of raw denim may never trump the downy yield of an elastic waistband ever again. But it also seems possible that our once-competing desires for comfort and glamour will merge, and there will be greater pressure for garments to check both boxes.

For every individual nestled in a sweatpants cocoon, there will be those who gravitate toward the most garish, outré getups imaginable instead. "After the Black Plague in the Middle Ages, fashion became more exaggerated," Steele says. "Suddenly men were wearing tight breeches and doublets, and women were wearing dresses with low décolletage." The Frankenstein monster outfits we're seeing now are the opposite of "another sun-kissed influencer being paid to wear something boring at their modern vacation home in Malibu; it's people at their wits' end putting together outfits for the love of the game," says Chris Black, founder of Done to Death Projects and a frequent contributor to @wfhfits. It's less about an imperative to look good and more about finding the joy in fashion. If quarantine has given us anything, it's the permission to finally dress however we damn well please.—**ISABEL B. SLONE**

#PILLOWCHALLENGE

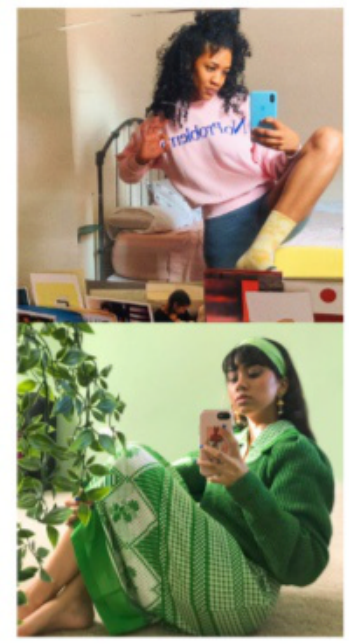
FROM TOP: DANCER-CHOREOGRAPHER KATYA JONES AND ACTRESS HALLE BERRY GOT IN ON THE ANARCHIC FUN.

#METGALACHALLENGE



INSTAGRAM USERS @JAIDOTFOOT (TOP LEFT) AND @LACHRWATSON (ABOVE LEFT) CHANNELED PAST LOOKS FROM RIHANNA AND AMBER VALLETTA, RESPECTIVELY.

WORKING FROM HOME FITS (@WFHFITS)



FROM TOP: CREATIVE STRATEGIST NIA PORTER AND WRITER-EDITOR SEEHAM RAHMAN IN THEIR WORK-FROM-HOME FINEST.

ROSS, PORTER, RAHMAN, BERRY, AND JONES: COURTESY OF THE SUBJECTS; JAI' LON LIGHTFOOT: GREGORY B. ELION JR.; RIHANNA: NEILSON BARNARD/GETTY IMAGES; WATSON: JILLIAN CLARK; VALLETTA: EVAN AGOSTINI/GETTY IMAGES.

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Performance ART

Harris Reed dressed Harry Styles and Solange Knowles while still in school. Now the designer is aiming for an even bigger stage.

Reed wears a look from their graduate collection.

"NO HOLDS BARRED. I love that expression," says Harris Reed. The designer, who uses they/them pronouns and identifies as gender-fluid, was constantly on the move as a kid, living in 30 different places. They sought refuge in dress-up, using fashion "as an elevator conversation, showing people who you were within five seconds." Reed's mother, a Mexican American model-turned-candlemaker-turned-perfumer, and their British documentary filmmaker father encouraged this sartorial experimentation. "I was always pinning and clamping and duct-taping things together," Reed says. "It's a running joke in my family that I got into the best design school in the world never having used a sewing machine properly." That school: Central Saint Martins, alma mater of John Galliano and Alexander McQueen, whom Reed grew up reading about in magazines.

While there, they developed an Instagram following that now tops 166,000 and began working with stylist Harry Lambert, who dresses Harry Styles. Reed's glam rock–meets-Victorian designs ended up on Styles for his arena tours. "They were taking a huge chance on me, when he was wearing nothing but Gucci, Saint Laurent, and McQueen, and there I was using my sewing machine that was 50 bucks from Target, in my kitchen eating Chicken McNuggets," Reed says. Soon, their designs showed up on performers such as Solange Knowles, Celeste, and Troye Sivan. Reed also branched into modeling, walking the Gucci runway, and was selected by Alessandro Michele for the house's first gender-neutral fragrance campaign. Reed often models their own designs on Instagram, serving as a combination designer and muse: "For me, performance can be me going to the grocery store. I'll literally wear what I've put on Harry's back—what he would wear in front of an arena."

Their graduate collection, titled "Thriving in Our Outrage," was inspired, in part, by Henry Cyril Paget, the fifth Marquess of Anglesey, who spent his fortune on jewels and elaborate costumes and converted his family chapel into a theater that mounted Oscar Wilde plays—at a time when Wilde was imprisoned for "obscenity." Reed had been looking forward to showing the collection in the CSM graduate showcase, but when the lockdown interfered, they found creative work-arounds that far more established designers would envy. They paid tribute to their signature supersize hats with a hat filter on Instagram, "worn" by Kaia Gerber, Jeremy O. Harris, Jodie Turner-Smith, and other celebrities. (And noncelebrities: The filter was used more than 850,000 times.) And, working with illustrator and Rhode Island School of Design student Lukas Palumbo and animator Lauren Deane Hunter, they created Victorian theater maquettes, in front of which an animated Reed modeled the pieces from the collection, which juxtaposed classic Savile Row tailoring with opulent touches like crinolines, yards of lace, and Bowie-worthy boots.

"[Harry Styles] took a huge chance on me when I was using my sewing machine that was 50 bucks from Target."

Harry Styles in a Reed design on tour in Manila.

The combination was a tongue-in-cheek way of addressing misconceptions about gender fluidity being "smack-dab in the middle of masculine and feminine." Reed's designs are always avowedly political, as is their public presence. When we speak, Reed has been giving their feed over to imagery of the Black Lives Matter protests they've been attending and to the intersectional aspects of Pride month: "I believe every brand and designer has a complete and utter obligation to take a political stance."

—VÉRONIQUE HYLAND

COLLECTION STILL: PHOTOGRAPHED BY HARRIS REED, WITH ILLUSTRATION BY LUKAS PALUMBO; STYLES: HELENE PAMBRUN.

If you can
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you can make
a cheesecake.

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WHAT A DOLL

Louis Vuitton's diminutive mascot, Vivienne, expands her reach.

WHEN VIVIENNE MADE HER DEBUT, she caused a fashion-world frenzy. No, she wasn't a new runway face or a budding influencer, but rather an inanimate It Girl: a jet-setting Louis Vuitton mascot in the form of a doll. Fans of the house went on a hide-and-seek mission with the hashtag #FindVivienne on Instagram, as influencers snapped photos of her around the globe shortly after her official launch in 2017. With her bloom-shaped head and right eye emblazoned with an LV *fleur*, Vivienne is the embodiment of the house's iconic monogram canvas. And the pint-size poster girl has a wardrobe most of us could only dream of.

This season, Vivienne reinvents herself yet again, taking a turn as everything from an astronaut to a snowboarder, dressed in some of 2020's biggest trends, including patchwork denim and tie-dye. Plus, she's got a whole new range of accessories, from petite-size playing cards, key chains, and a music box to more extravagant offerings, like the Malle Maison Vivienne, a four-story residence tucked neatly inside a classic Vuitton monogrammed trunk. So clip her on your bag, tuck her in your pocket, or bring her on a trip, but whatever you do, do not leave Vivienne on the shelf.—**NAOMI ROUGEAU**

VIVIENNE DOLLS, LOUIS VUITTON, FROM $1,930–$3,350 EACH, LOUISVUITTON.COM

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OFF THE WALL

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ARTWORK BY MAYA SLININGER.
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MITCHELL FEINBERG.

Accessories

HANDBAG, CHANEL, $3,200, SELECT CHANEL BOUTIQUES NATIONWIDE. ARTWORK BY MEGHAN SHIMEK.

HANDBAG, FENDI, $2,790, FENDI.COM.
ARTWORK BY SALLY ENGLAND.

Accessories

HANDBAG, ETRO, $1,420, ETRO BOUTIQUES NATIONWIDE. ARTWORK BY RICHARD SAJA. FOR DETAILS, SEE SHOPPING GUIDE.

"SINCE 1854"
DAUPHINE
HANDBAG,
LOUIS VUITTON,
866-VUITTON.
ARTWORK BY
MOLLY HAYNES.

Accessories

HANDBAG, SALVATORE FERRAGAMO, $3,500, FERRAGAMO.COM. ARTWORK BY JULIA BLAND (*MOTH*, 2019).

MOTH (2019) BY JULIA BLAND; COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND DEREK ELLER GALLERY.

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BRACELET, VAN CLEEF & ARPELS, 877-VAN-CLEEF

PLAYING TO THE GALLERY

The season's most compelling fine jewelry offers a dose of art-world cred.

DIOR

"I ASKED MYSELF WHAT CHRISTIAN DIOR and I would have been doing during confinement," says Dior jewelry creative director Victoire de Castellane. "Since he was known for being a gourmet, just like me, I saw us in the kitchen, making pastries. I also pictured us exercising in the salon of 30 Avenue Montaigne and dreaming of an Easter egg hunt." Using the house founder as her guiding light, de Castellane conjured up dreamy additions to the Rose des Vents range. The pièce de résistance: shoulder-grazing earrings featuring the line's trademark enamel compasses alongside sun and moon motifs.

LEFT: A SKETCH BY DIOR JOAILLERIE CREATIVE DIRECTOR VICTOIRE DE CASTELLANE; RIGHT: DE CASTELLANE.

CELINE

SCULPTOR CÉSAR BALDACCINI is perhaps best remembered for his sculpture series *Directed Compressions*. Introduced in 1959, the pieces were made from soldered and welded scrap metal—old license plates, cars, discarded piping—that was then compressed with a hydraulic press. Over time, his works became monumental in size. Looking to apply the technique to something more sentimental, Baldaccini began collecting jewelry from friends, which he pressed into small totems. For fall 2020, Celine partnered with the Fondation César for a 200-piece limited run of these pendants in sterling silver and gold vermeil.

LEFT: A 1966 *COMPRESSION* WORK BY CÉSAR BALDACCINI; RIGHT: BALDACCINI.

VAN CLEEF & ARPELS

"A HIGH JEWELRY BOUTIQUE is a nice place. You feel safe there," says artist Alexandre Benjamin Navet. "But it also feels quite solemn and imposing." To counter that mood, Navet, the 2017 winner of Van Cleef & Arpels's Grand Prix Design Parade Toulon, took to the walls of several of the firm's boutiques to create pastel florals bursting with color. "I wanted to create the illusion that they had appeared in the windows during the night as if by magic," says Navet, whose displays offer the perfect complement to the firm's Frivole collection of yellow and white gold floral-blossom fine jewelry.

LEFT: A FLORAL PASTEL WORK BY ALEXANDRE BENJAMIN NAVET; RIGHT: NAVET.

COMPRESSION (1966) BY CÉSAR BALDACCINI: COURTESY OF NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND AND SBJ/ADAGP PARIS; BALDACCINI: MICHEL BARET/GAMMA-RAPHO/GETTY IMAGES; REMAINING IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE DESIGNERS; FOR DETAILS, SEE SHOPPING GUIDE.

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LOAFER, CELINE BY HEDI SLIMANE, $920, CELINE.COM

HIGH-TOP LOAFER, LOEWE, $1,150, LOEWE, NYC

LOAFER, CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN, $695, CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN.COM

LOAFER, GIUSEPPE ZANOTTI, $895, GIUSEPPE ZANOTTI.COM

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LOAFER, ROGER VIVIER, $1,545, ROGERVIVIER.COM

LOAFER, TOD'S, $645, TODS.COM

LOAFER, GUCCI, $850, GUCCI.COM

LOAFER, STUART WEITZMAN, $450, STUART WEITZMAN.COM

MODEL: LIU SONG (STYLED BY JI KIDD); REMAINING IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE DESIGNERS.

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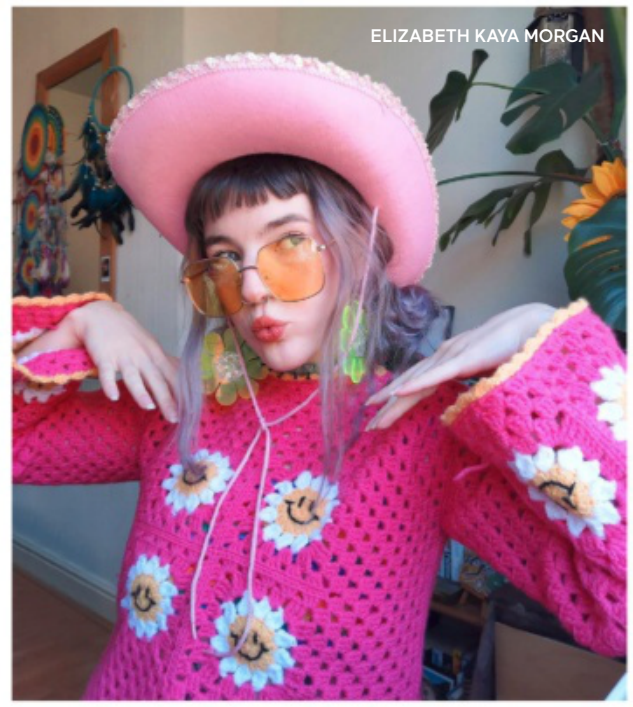

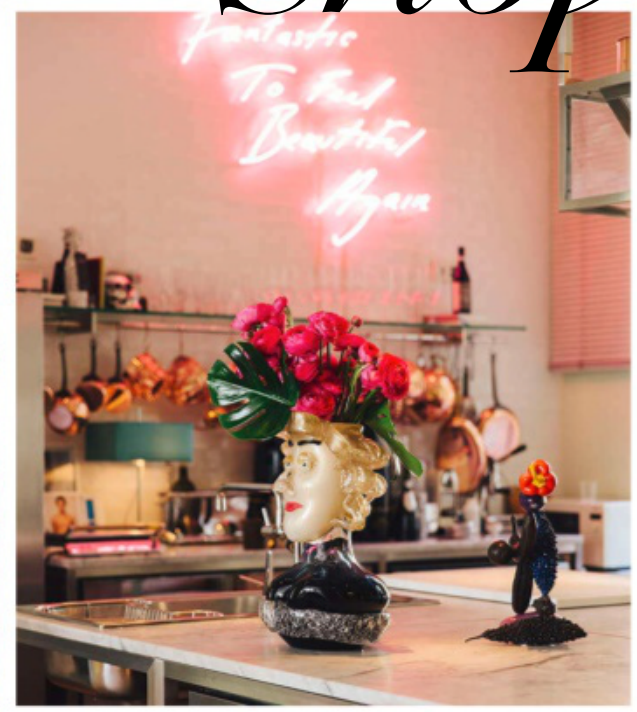

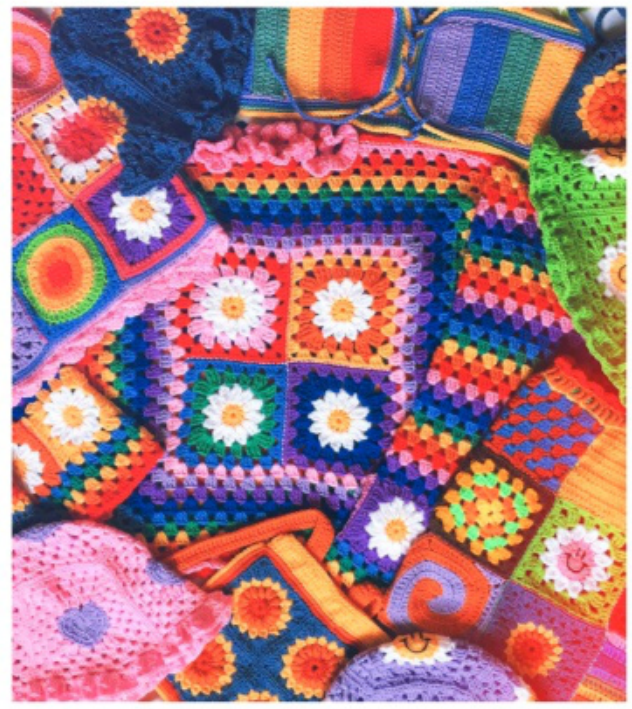

FLORAL ARRANGEMENT: FROM THE BOOK *FLOURISH* BY WILLOW CROSSLEY, PHOTOGRAPHED BY EMMA MITCHELL; MORGAN: COURTESY OF THE SUBJECT; VASE: FELIX VON DER OSTEN; SELF: TSCHABALALA SELF STUDIO; CROCHETED CLOTHES: ELIZABETH KAYA MORGAN; CROSSLEY, GARDEN: COURTESY OF WILLOW CROSSLEY; ELIE-MEIRÉ: ALBRECHT FUCHS; *TWO WOMEN* BY TSCHABALALA SELF, 2019, COURTESY OF PILAR CORRIAS AND EVA PRESENHUBER.

PURSUITS OF HAPPINESS

From fine art to food, we find inspiration in four talents who've mastered the art of thriving in isolation with style.

Shops

SKIRT, FABIANA FILIPPI, $1,040, FABIANAFILIPPI.COM

BRA TOP, LONGCHAMP, $1,115, LONGCHAMP.COM

CROSS-BODY BAG, MCM, $525, SIMILAR STYLES AT MCMWORLDWIDE.COM

VAN GOGH IRISES PAINT-BY-NUMBER KIT, ARTIST'S LOFT NECESSITIES, $15, MICHAELS.COM

SCARF, KENNETH IZE, $315, EXCLUSIVELY AT 24S.COM

EXTRA FINE OIL PAINT BOX, CHARVIN, $200 (SET OF 12), JERRYSARTARMA.COM

SWEATER, KARIGAM, $245, KARIGAM.COM

MUSEUM QUALITY

For art world darling Tschabalala Self, creative expression doesn't stop with the canvas.

EASEL, BLICK STUDIO, $130, DICKBLICK.COM

PANTS, ACNE STUDIOS, $470, ACNESTUDIOS.COM

EARRINGS, HERMÈS, $1,925, HERMES.COM

HOODIE, COACH X BASQUIAT, $295, COACH.COM

BIKE SHORTS, L'AGENCE, $150, L'AGENCE, LOS ANGELES

RING, KHIRY, $465, KHIRY.COM

SNEAKER, REEBOK BY PYER MOSS, $250, PYERMOSS.COM

TSCHABALALA SELF

"Making art brings me joy because it allows me catharsis," Self says. "Each work is a small picture window into my inner self, a part of myself that I can share with the world. While working in my studio, I enjoy listening to NPR—and I love wearing my Pyer Moss Reeboks, as they are comfy and fashionable, the perfect combo."

IN FULL BLOOM

English florist Willow Crossley's foraged a charming lesson in resourcefulness.

COAT, HERNO, $1,210, HERNO, NYC

BLOUSE, POLO RALPH LAUREN, $198, RALPHLAUREN.COM

GARDENING GLOVES, WOMANSWORK, $38, SHOPTERRAIN.COM

SUNGLASSES, GENTLE MONSTER, $249, GENTLEMONSTER.COM

TOP, MARC JACOBS, $1,300, MARCJACOBS.COM

SKIRT, WALES BONNER, $1,070, WALESBONNER.NET

EARRINGS, OF RARE ORIGIN, $1,150, OFRAREORIGIN.COM

DRESS, BYTIMO, $435, MODAOPERANDI.COM

GARDEN-IN-A-BAG ALPINE STRAWBERRIES, POTTING SHED CREATIONS, LTD., $10, POTTINGSHEDCREATIONS.COM

JACKET, ETRO, SELECT ETRO BOUTIQUES NATIONWIDE

JEANS, 7 FOR ALL MANKIND, $168, 7FORALLMANKIND.COM

BOOT, BRUNELLO CUCINELLI, $1,395, BRUNELLO CUCINELLI, NYC

SKIRT, ISABEL MARANT, $680, ISABELMARANT.COM

HANDWOVEN BASKET, WILLIAMS SONOMA, $40 (GARDENING TOOLS SOLD SEPARATELY), WILLIAMS-SONOMA.COM

PYRAMID TEA BAGS, PG TIPS, $17, ENGLISHTEASTORE.COM

WILLOW CROSSLEY

"Flowers are just so life-enhancing. If I'm feeling stressed, a couple of hours weeding and puttering in the garden—probably in a boilersuit with a cup of tea—is the perfect antidote. But while I favor silence in the garden, my studio is all about cheesy '80s rock blaring on Spotify."

SELF: CHRISTIAN DEFONTE; FLORAL ARRANGEMENT: FROM THE BOOK *FLOURISH* BY WILLOW CROSSLEY, PHOTOGRAPHED BY EMMA MITCHELL; BYTIMO DRESS AND ISABEL MARANT SKIRT: COURTESY OF MODA OPERANDI; REMAINING IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE DESIGNERS AND STORES; FOR DETAILS, SEE SHOPPING GUIDE.

DREAM WEAVER

From her bedroom in Leeds, England, Elizabeth Kaya Morgan turns out whimsical crochet work that offers an instant mood lift.

JACKET, FENTY, $780, FENTY.COM

SHORTS, GIMME KAYA, $150, GIMMEKAYA.CO.UK

NECKLACE, HARWELL GODFREY, SHOPETC JEWELRY.COM

DRESS, GERMANIER, $1,225, MODAOPERANDI.COM

PIMA COTTON SKEIN, WE ARE KNITTERS, $15, WEAREKNITTERS.COM

TIE DYE KIT, JACQUARD, $20, JOANN.COM

DRESS, RIXO, $470, RIXO.CO.UK

T-SHIRT, GUESS, $59, GUESS.COM

SCARF, GABRIELA HEARST, $1,520, GABRIELAHEARST.COM

SWEATER, SEA, $385, MODAOPERANDI.COM

JEANS, MICHAEL MICHAEL KORS, $125, MICHAELKORS.COM

LOAFER, SANTONI, $950, SANTONISHOES.COM

NECKLACE KIT, ROXANNE ASSOULIN, $150, ROXANNEASSOULIN.COM

ELIZABETH KAYA MORGAN

"I find crocheting to be very therapeutic and rewarding. I adore making my own dream clothes every day—and seeing my creations being enjoyed so much by others," Morgan says. "When I'm working, I like to sit in my comfy clothes and listen to podcasts to help me zone out."

GERMANIER DRESS AND SEA SWEATER: COURTESY OF MODA OPERANDI; ELIE-MEIRÉ: JAKE ROSENBERG/COVETEUR/TRUNK; ALBERTA FERRETTI PANTS: COURTESY OF MODA OPERANDI; REMAINING IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE DESIGNERS AND STORES; FOR DETAILS, SEE SHOPPING GUIDE.

CARDIGAN, PAULE KA, $350, PAULEKA.COM

TOP, PIAZZA SEMPIONE, $795, PIAZZASEMPIONE.COM

BRA, YASMINE ESLAMI, $100, YASMINE-ESLAMI.COM

SHORTS, ALEJANDRA ALONSO ROJAS, $495, ALEJANDRA ALONSOROJAS.COM

EARRINGS, TOM FORD, $890, TOMFORD.COM

PRODUCE BOX, NYBLL, $42, NYBLL.COM

PANTS, ALBERTA FERRETTI, $1,095, BLOOMINGDALE'S STORES NATIONWIDE

CALIFORNIA EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL, FAT GOLD, $20, GOODEGGS.COM.

DINNER IS SERVED

Designer Michelle Elie-Meiré's joyful Instagram cooking sessions owe as much to her joie de vivre as to her colorful ensembles.

SIGNATURE COOKWARE, GREAT JONES, $395 (SET OF FIVE POTS), GREATJONESGOODS.COM

DRESS, ALIÈTTE, ALIETTENY.COM

SKIRT, SEVENTY VENEZIA, $255, NORDSTROM.COM

RING, PRIM BY MICHELLE ELIE, $442, MAISONDEMODE.COM

SANDAL, NEOUS, $560, NET-A-PORTER.COM

BLOUSE, AMI PARIS, $625, AMIPARIS.COM

MICHELLE ELIE-MEIRÉ

"Cooking feeds not only the body but the soul," Elie-Meiré says. "Even virtually, it feels so authentic and pure, as if we're really going back to the essence of being in the kitchen together. So why not make it fashionable? And don't forget the jazz!"

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BROW DOWN

Frame your fall look with full, perfectly shaped arches.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ALLIE HOLLOWAY; STYLED BY SARAH ZENDEJAS; MAKEUP BY SIR JOHN FOR L'ORÉAL PARIS; GROOMING ASSISTANT CYLER SAYS; MODEL: MILI PINEIRO AT IMG.

PRESENTED BY L'ORÉAL PARIS

HOW TO GET FULL BROWS

Defined arches are the universally flattering feature that will never go out of style.

If the eyes are the windows to the soul, consider your eyebrows your window frames. A strong shape that looks naturally full is so impactful, brows can practically stand alone as an entire look. Celebrity makeup artist and L'Oréal Paris brand ambassador Sir John turns to L'Oréal Paris UnbelievaBrow Longwear Waterproof Brow Gel to sculpt brows that are big and beautiful thanks to a thickening, waterproof formula that leaves them enhanced for up to 48 hours. "The staying power through a long day is worth it for me," he says. "When my celebrity clients need it for the red carpet or a performance, it just stays anchored." The dual-sided tool that comes with the formula features an angled brush and spoolie to create hair-like strokes and striking definition.

UNBELIEVABROW LONGWEAR BROW GEL IS AVAILABLE IN 5 SHADES $17, ULTA.COM

SIR JOHN
@sirjohn
Celebrity Makeup Artist

GET THE LOOK
Sir John breaks down the steps for creating the perfect brow.

PICK YOUR SHADE
"You want to go for a cooler tone with the brows, a little bit ashier, even if you have warm-toned hair color, like a red head. Cooler colors look better in photos and videos. The five shades of this product all hit the mark."

APPLY TO ONE HALF...
"First, scrape off any excess formula when you remove the wand. When you apply, start at the highest point of the arch, right above your pupil, which is usually where we all lack density, and go out toward the tail of your brow. Quickly switch to the spoolie brush and comb the formula in your brows, stroking upward and outward—the effect makes your eyes look lifted."

... THEN THE OTHER
"Go back to the 'front' of your brow and fill back toward the high point. Get the spoolie again and brush upward for a little bit of a feather brow. Use the angled brush to help correct and guide the color if needed. And if you realize you've applied too much, brush in the opposite direction to blend. This product dries fast, so keep some cotton buds in the bathroom nearby for touch-ups."

PRO TRICK: If you're missing hairs to begin with, Sir John recommends using a glue stick as a brow primer before you get started. "It gives you a texture that you can use to create a hair-like appearance."

PHOTOGRAPHER: DON PENNY; STYLIST: MIAKO KATOH

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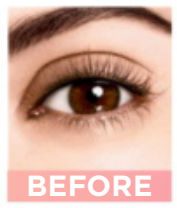

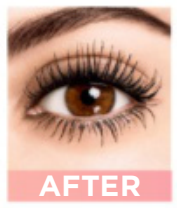

L'ORÉAL PARIS

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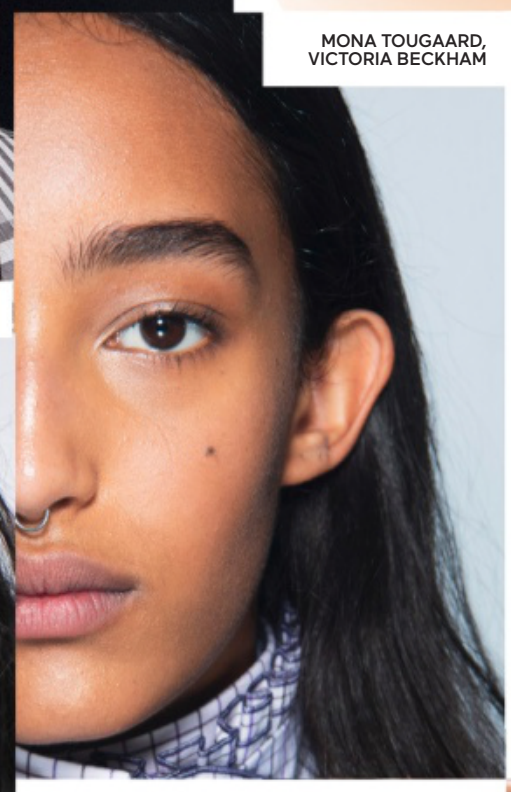
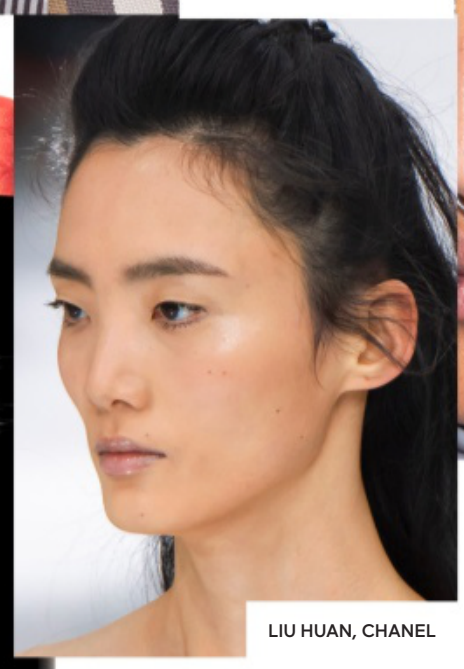
RUNWAY TO ELLEWAY

A prophetic breath of realism swept through *fall's runways*, revealing *doable beauty looks* with bold touches inspired by what's close at hand.

JOAN SMALLS, BURBERRY



MONA TOUGAARD, VICTORIA BECKHAM



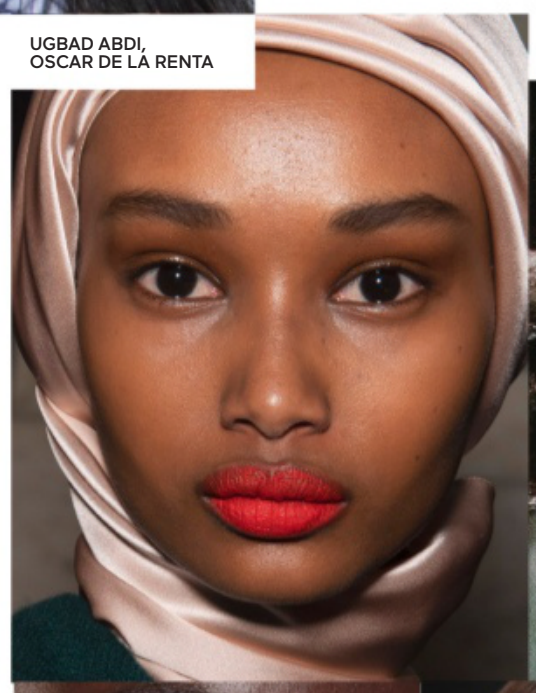
LIU HUAN, CHANEL

FRESH FACE FORWARD

SEEN AT: Chanel, Burberry, Victoria Beckham, Proenza Schouler, Brandon Maxwell

Luminous skin was the beauty centerpiece at Fashion Weeks across the globe. Chanel makeup artist Lucia Pica describes the house's vibe in three words: "super-natural, fresh, and glowy." Bright skin was also the focus at Victoria Beckham. "The look is pared-back," the designer says. "A healthy complexion with a golden highlight on the eyes allows each model's characteristics to shine through."

GET THE LOOK: Start with a light-catching primer, like Victoria Beckham Beauty Cell Rejuvenating Priming Moisturizer in Golden ($145, top). Use a Kabuki brush to buff on a sheer cover-up, like Giorgio Armani Neo Nude Foundation ($40, above). Then enhance your glow with Chanel Baume Essentiel in Rosée ($45, left) across cheekbones and onto lids for a hint of color and shine.



UGBAD ABDI, OSCAR DE LA RENTA

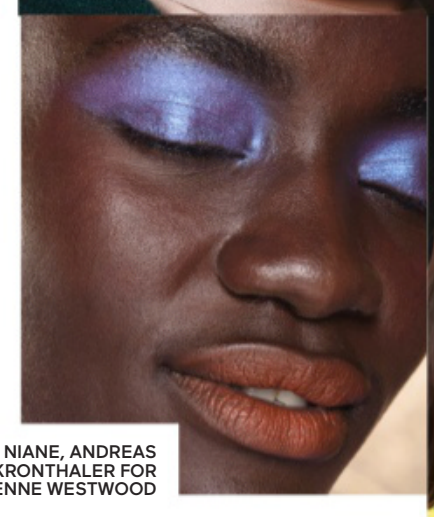
BELLA HADID, MARC JACOBS

COLOR GUARD

SEEN AT: Oscar de la Renta, Marc Jacobs, Christopher John Rogers, Anna Sui, Andreas Kronthaler for Vivienne Westwood

For maximum impact, follow a simple rule: Pick one feature and commit. "The lips say it all," says Tom Pecheux, the makeup artist at Oscar de la Renta. He blended two lipsticks, creating a striking orange-red, then topped it with matching gloss for a tone that made a statement on all 40 models. If a dramatic eye is more your style, find inspiration from Andreas Kronthaler for Vivienne Westwood and Marc Jacobs. Makeup artists at those shows painted lids in metallic jewel-toned shades or gave models like Bella Hadid dramatic winged liner and bold lashes.

GET THE LOOK: Using a brush, apply lip color to the center of the lip and work your way out to the corners. Try M.A.C Retro Matte Liquid Lipcolour in Feels So Grand ($22) or Maybelline New York Color Sensational The Creams in Coral Rise ($7, left). Standout eyes are simple when you use a graphic eyeliner, like L'Oréal Paris Le Liner Signature ($11, below). Finish with ultrablack Grande Cosmetics GrandeMascara Conditioning Peptide Mascara ($25, right).



SOKHNA NIANE, ANDREAS KRONTHALER FOR VIVIENNE WESTWOOD

KAPRICE IMPERIAL, CHRISTOPHER JOHN ROGERS

SMALLS: HUAN, AND NIANE: IMAXTREE; TOUGAARD AND ABDI: JASON LLOYD-EVANS; HADID: COURTESY OF MARC JACOBS; IMPERIAL: SOPHIE SAHARA/SHUTTERSTOCK; REMAINING IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE BRANDS.

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AJOK MADEL, TOM FORD

KENNAH LAU, BALENCIAGA

MIKA SCHNEIDER, TORY BURCH

NOORTJE HAAK, DIOR

JONATHAN SIMKHAI

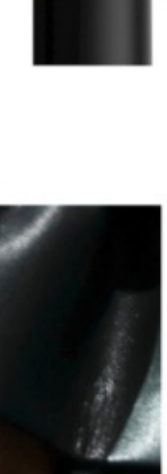
LAQUAN SMITH

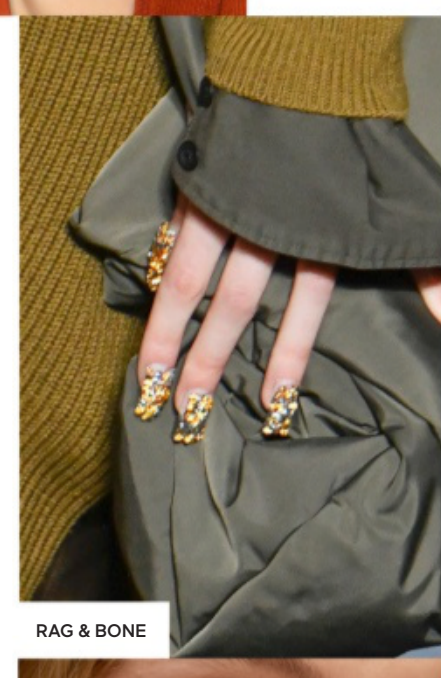
STRONG ACCENTS

SEEN AT: Balenciaga, Dior, Jonathan Simkhai, LaQuan Smith, Tom Ford, Tory Burch

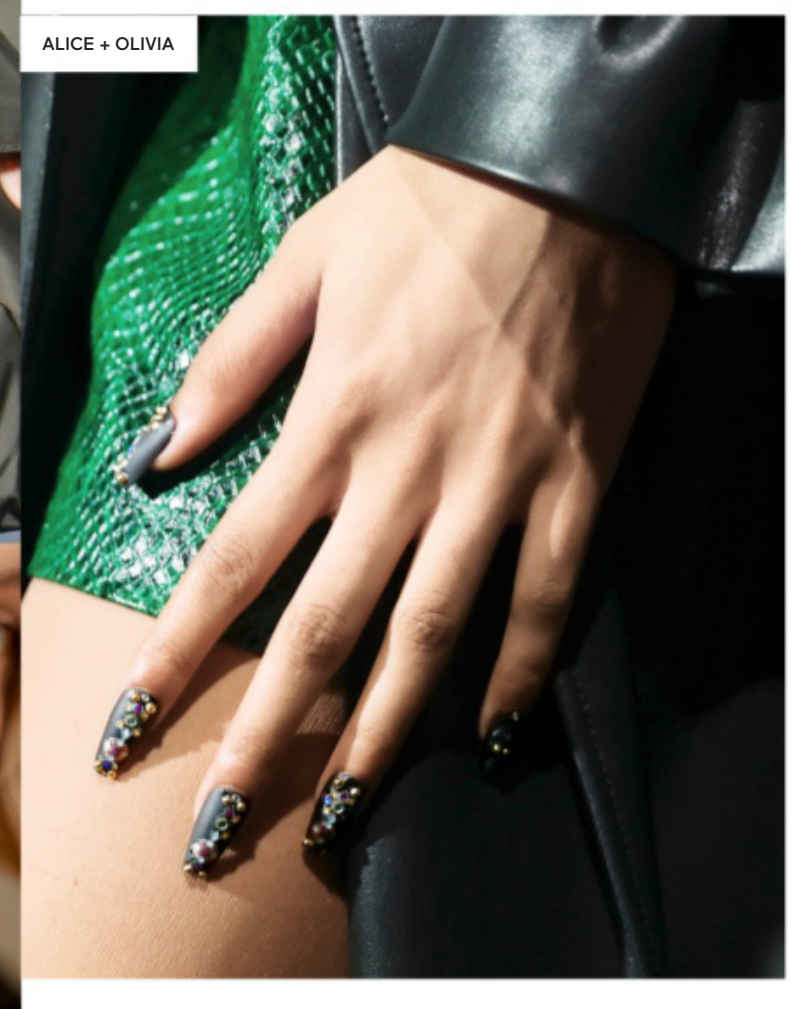
All it takes is a minute to re-create the hair seen on the runways—and a cute accessory might be closer than you think. "The idea to use an old phone charger came from a conversation with Demna Gvasalia about reusing what has become obsolete," says hairstylist Holli Smith, who wrapped old charging cords around models' knots for Balenciaga, creating a viral sensation. A scarf, clip, or flick of the wrist can also yield remarkable results. "It's a little bit '70s, a little bit Victorian," says hairstylist Guido Palau of the simple hairline twists seen at Tory Burch. For a slightly amped-up version, try the double twist by hairstylist Odile Gilbert at Jonathan Simkhai. Divide a sleek low ponytail in half, twist each section into ropes, then interlace and secure with an elastic.

GET THE LOOK: To make a style last, start with a texturizing spray, like Redken Deep Clean Dry Shampoo ($24). After spiraling through the hair, finish with a flexible, long-wear hair spray, like TRESemmé Compressed Micro Mist Level 4 Extend Hair Spray ($5, right). If you only have seconds to spare, simply add a unique clip, like Tom Ford's Gilded Feather Hair Clip ($750, left).

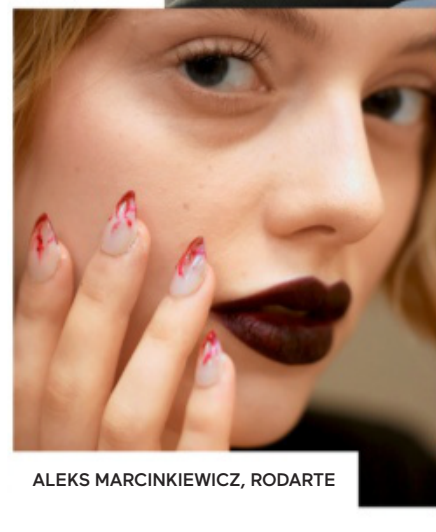




RAG & BONE



ALICE + OLIVIA



ALEKS MARCINKIEWICZ, RODARTE

INSTA-MANI

SEEN AT: Alice + Olivia, Rag & Bone, Rodarte

It's a not-so-hidden backstage beauty secret that many runway manicures are actually press-ons. "I can color, shape, and design all the nails in advance," says Mei Kawajiri, who spent two days perfecting tips for 40 models at Rag & Bone, noting that "press-ons were also the only way to get cool nails during quarantine." Kiss, whose tips and nail stickers were used for the rocker-chic nails at Alice + Olivia, saw sales increase by 71 percent while salons were closed. Dreaming of a mani from a top nail artist? Naomi Yasuda co-created two styles in SinfulColors' maximalist collection, Claws, and Kawajiri is still creating custom tips by request.

GET THE LOOK: Shape your nail bed using JINsoon HyperCare Cuticle Pusher + Reducer ($32). To duplicate the look from Alice + Olivia, top off matte black nails with Kiss 3D Luxe Accents ($5, left). Or try DM'ing your favorite nail artist, like Kawajiri (@nailsbymei), to inquire about personalized looks (starting at $200).—**MARGAUX ANBOUBA**

MADEL: FRAZER HARRISON/GETTY IMAGES; LAU AND SCHNEIDER: IMAXTREE; HAAK: PETER WHITE/GETTY IMAGES; LAQUAN SMITH MODEL: NOAM GALAI/GETTY IMAGES; JONATHAN SIMKHAI MODEL: MONICA SCHIPPER/GETTY IMAGES; RAG & BONE MODEL: VICTOR VIRGILE/GAMMA-RAPHO/GETTY IMAGES; ALICE & OLIVIA MODEL: ANNA WEBBER/GETTY IMAGES; MARCINKIEWICZ: SOPHIE SAHARA/SHUTTERSTOCK; REMAINING IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE BRANDS.

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CLIENT LATOYA HANKINS GETS HER HAIR SECTIONED BEFORE HER TREATMENT AT URSULA STEPHEN THE SALON IN BROOKLYN. PHOTOGRAPHED BY MIRANDA BARNES.

BLACK SALONS IN THE BALANCE

After being hit by COVID-19 closures, with their clients relying more and more on at-home hair care, stylists and owners of *Black salons*—aka Black Girl Church—*regain their footing.*

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Beauty
IN THE SALON CHAIR

CELEBRITY STYLIST URSULA STEPHEN OUTSIDE HER FORT GREENE, BROOKLYN , SALON.

The natural instinct is to hug. But Shirley Paul, a salon regular in her forties, offers her stylist, Ursula Stephen, a hesitant elbow bump instead. "It's my COVID hug," Stephen says through a protective mask bearing her initials, "US," of the now socially acceptable greeting. "I miss hugging people," Paul says. It's mid-June, and three months have passed since Ursula Stephen The Salon, a seven-year-old beauty mecca located in Fort Greene, Brooklyn, was last open. Stephen—best known as the celebrity stylist to Rihanna, Zendaya, and Serena—suspended business on March 21, when most of New York City was ordered to stay at home, save for essential workers. What qualifies as "essential" is something Stephen has thought a lot about since then.

"The one thing white girls were stressed about was mostly their hair color," she says. "Well, a brown girl, we need everything. We need a conditioner. We need cuts. We need trimming and a relaxer."

Also, we need time. Because of the intricacy of Black hairstyles—box braids, Senegalese twists, a good press—and the hours it takes to execute them correctly, family-level relationships naturally blossom in this intimate environment. For me, the 12-plus hours in the salon chair with a stylist allowed me to relish my Blackness. Box braids down to the floor at the tender age of seven? Yes, please! Or chatting with my stylist-turned-friend about the woman who asked to touch my hair at work, and the affirming "Can you believe?" that followed. The salon has long been a pillar of the Black community, a place where the most important events are hashed out. Even in the absence of a physical meeting place, Stephen and her stylists continued to meet regularly on Zoom while the salon was closed. "We'd talk business at first, and then we'd gossip," she says. "'Girl, you seen that?' It's like how we would normally be at the salon."

Given that COVID-19 has disproportionately affected Black and brown communities, Black salons have had all the more incentive to reopen, as safely and as soon as possible. At Stephen's, clients now sit six feet apart, blue disinfectant Barbicide can be found at every station, appointments are staggered, and temperatures are checked at the door. All calendars, everywhere, are very, very full. And why wouldn't they be? For women of color, the salon has long been regarded as a sacred space. "I possess a great affection for the cut and thrust of Black hair salons, the gossip and the drama," Emma Dabiri writes in her new book, *Twisted: The Tangled History of Black Hair Culture*. "The hair salon is a site where we can observe a microcosm of national issues, witnessing how, once again, Black hair proved a battlefield on which cultural and racial tensions were reproduced."

Black hair is inherently political. In 2019, California became the first state to pass the CROWN Act, which outlaws discrimination based on hair type (at press time, it had been enacted in seven states). The legislation was long overdue, inspired by high-profile microaggressions directed toward children at school and women at work. Research shows that Black women's hair is 3.4 times more likely to be deemed unprofessional in the workplace. In the beauty and fashion worlds, we see our trends stolen and presented on runways without credit, and we can't help but notice that our physical traits (in some cases, lips or skin tone) only seem to become trendy when a white person chooses to appropriate them via makeup, injections, or even surgery—aka Blackfishing. And yet we prevail with our community—best exemplified by the salon. "The salon is a release from the world," explains Mika "Constance" English, a stylist at Stephen's salon. "I'm a therapist, stylist, and friend all at the same time." Yene Damtew, the owner of Aesthetics Salon in Arlington, Virginia, agrees: "We do more than just hair." For Black women, she says, the salon represents "a place where clients can come to a communal space and meet new people, make new friends, and build a support system. There are a lot of conversations about racial equality, politics, leadership."

Just weeks before Stephen's reopening, and mere blocks from her salon, thousands took to the streets in Brooklyn to protest the unjust murders of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor, and countless other Black lives lost. And, too often, the killers remain free without arrest. At this moment in time, Black Girl Church—a space where most people in the room have seen and been affected by racism, in stark contrast to the number of Americans just waking up to its reality—feels more needed than ever. "When you're in a hair salon, honey, we're all sisters," Stephen explains. "This is where we do it, this is where it is, honey." It's a safe haven for Stephen and her stylists, who have already had countless discussions over the years about the murders of Black individuals at the hands of law enforcement. They're back together in person, talking about activism, police brutality, and loved ones who've been lost due to COVID-19. In person, at least for now.

The veteran stylist welcomes change. "Everything happens for a reason," Stephen says as she sits outside her salon waving to neighbors in the community. And her community—resilient, creative, and essential—can weather any storm.—**CHLOE HALL**

> "When you're in a hair salon, honey, we're all sisters. This is where we do it, this is where it is."
>
> —URSULA STEPHEN

TOP SALONS

Beyond Ursula Stephen's Brooklyn destination (pictured here), below are three beloved Black-owned salons from coast to coast.

I LOVE LULU HAIR CAFÉ LOS ANGELES

@iloveluluhair
Famous for: Owner Tallulah "Lulu" Marcelin specializes in hair health for natural textures. Solange Knowles, Angela Bassett, Rutina Wesley, and Crystal Fox are fans.

BLEUTIQUE HAIR ATLANTA

@bleutiquehair
Famous for: Metowi Willingham's hair installation technique requires no thread, glue, or braids. Instead, she uses tiny beads to lock pieces in place. Clients include Lizzo, Nia Long, and La La Anthony.

AMINATA AFRICAN HAIR BRAIDING NEW YORK CITY

@aminata.african.hair.braiding
Famous for: Mother-daughter duo Ami Colé and Astou N'Diaye are lauded for quick and affordable braids in countless styles. —TAYLOR DAVIS

OPENING DAY AT URSULA STEPHEN THE SALON. CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: STYLIST MIKA "CONSTANCE" ENGLISH; STYLISTS TRENNACE GALLATIN (LEFT) AND SHANICE BATTLE STYLE CLIENTS AURORA (LEFT) AND LATOYA HANKINS; NEW STATIONS SET UP FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING; STYLIST ENGLISH TREATS CLIENT ERICKA POWELL.

WHEN THE TABLES TURN

The *beauty industry* has a long, unfortunate history of *microaggressions*—even among its most celebrated tastemakers. *Kahlana Barfield Brown* lets us in.

THE AUTHOR, PHOTOGRAPHED BY FLO NGALA.

I remember the incident like it happened yesterday. I had been invited, along with a small group of other editors, on an exclusive press trip for a luxury brand in France. Everyone in the group was considered a beauty VIP; they were people I'd admired my entire career. On the first morning of our trip, when I showed up in the hotel lobby to meet our group for breakfast, I dressed the part. Nothing too over-the-top: Balmain blazer, jeans, and a Chanel bag—casual, by my standards. I'm all smiles. Bubbly. Excited to get the trip started. When out of the blue, one of the other editors shoots me a conspiratorial sideways glance and blurts out, "Sooo.... Who's your trick daddy?"

It caught me completely off guard. Instantly, my entire mood changed. One: What ever happened to "Good morning"? Two: Why is this woman using slang to talk to me? And three: Would she be asking me this question if I were white or Asian? Even as a joke, it would have been in bad taste. But after a brief moment of silence and a blank stare, I knew she wasn't joking. "I mean, how can you afford all those designer clothes?" she clarified, driving home the completely racist underbelly of her question. This white woman was seriously questioning how I was able to afford the clothes on my back. Specifically asking what man, or "trick daddy," purchased them for me. I felt disrespected. Of all the editors on the trip, she had the most clout. She was a veteran beauty director who had worked in the industry for over 20 years. Somehow, I managed to laugh it off, but it wasn't funny. And over the course of my career, it had become an all-too-common occurrence. Small slights. Said in jest. In front of colleagues. With a hint of a smirk. Just enough to make you feel less than.

Fortunately, this incident wasn't indicative of my overall experience as a Black woman in the beauty industry. I spent the majority of my career as an editor at a fashion publication where I was promoted numerous times and felt incredibly valued. I had a white boss who appreciated my Blackness and made me feel integral to the company rather than inconsequential. I hired Black interns and assistants, wrote Black stories, and profiled and helped elevate Black makeup artists and hairstylists—and she encouraged me at every step. If she saw a bus coming, she'd pull me out of the way instead of throwing me under it. She gave me exposure, made sure I was paid a competitive salary, and taught me the importance of being a leader in my own right. I also had an incredibly supportive editor-in-chief who personally called me into his office to tell me he was putting me in media training because there weren't enough Black faces on TV.

But being Black in a predominantly white industry comes with its challenges. I didn't have to wait long to experience microaggression in the industry. It happened at the very first beauty event I attended.

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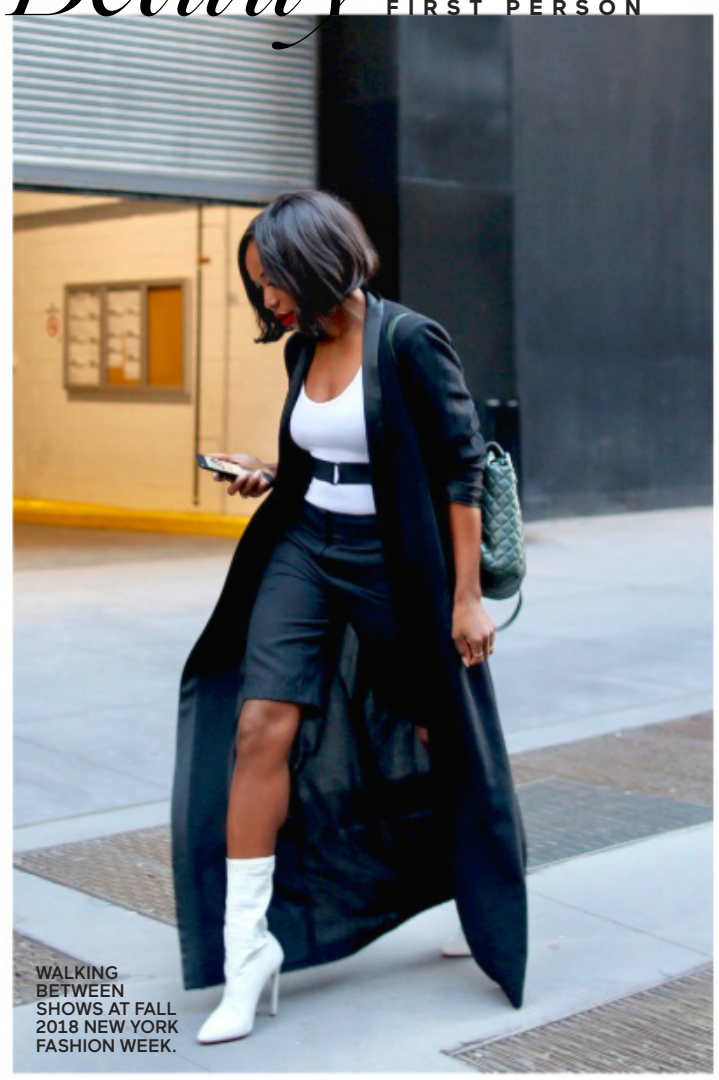

WALKING BETWEEN SHOWS AT FALL 2018 NEW YORK FASHION WEEK.

READY TO TAKE FLIGHT ON A 2017 PRESS TRIP TO THE SOUTH OF FRANCE.

MINUTES AWAY FROM FILMING A *TODAY* SEGMENT IN 2016.

Things started out pretty typical. The brand hosting the event sent a car service to pick me up from my office. When I arrived, I noticed that I was the only Black woman in attendance—nothing out of the ordinary. Since I was a newbie, I walked around the room introducing myself. Unbeknownst to me, one of the women I approached was the beauty director for one of the most influential fashion magazines in the world. Here's where things got weird. "Hi, I'm Kahlana," I said with a smile, extending my hand to shake hers. I'll never forget the expression on that woman's face when she looked at my hand. You would've thought I was holding a dead fish. It was like she was literally repulsed by my presence. She looked me up and down, rolled her eyes, and walked away. Thankfully, another beauty director, a white woman who witnessed the encounter, asked if I wanted to sit next to her. To this day, every time I see her, I remind her that she was the person who made me feel comfortable at an industry event where "social distancing" had an entirely different meaning.

The daily deskside, though, were even more problematic and illustrated the bigger challenges within the beauty industry as a whole. Every week, executives from various beauty brands dropped by our office to show off their new product launches. I remember one deskside so vividly. The PR director from a prestigious brand I'd always loved was so excited and proud to show me their new collection of foundations. "Wait until you see this new formula, and I have the perfect shade for you," she said. That would be a first, I thought. I watched with excitement as she pulled out a collection of 12 foundations. She set the darkest shade in front of me. Is this some kind of joke, I thought, looking at the bottle. The shade wouldn't have even matched Beyoncé's skin tone, and I'm much darker. "This is way too light for me," I said. "You think?" she responded. "Let's try it on the back of your hand, because I really think once it's blended down it will adapt to your skin tone." I'm going back and forth in my mind about whether or not I want to play this game with her. Does she think all Black people are the same complexion? And, at this point, if a brand is only offering 12 shades, none darker than J.Lo, it's clear that the Black community isn't their target audience. I let her put a swatch of the foundation on my hand, and her response was one I've heard all too often: "We're actually planning to expand our shade range later this year."

But as my career evolved, so did my voice. I figured, If my voice was the only Black voice in the room, I'd clear my throat and express my opinions boldly. Not only for myself, but for my people. Instead of letting snarky comments from white beauty directors slide, I began to clap back. When a brand showed up to my office without a full color range, I challenged them on their limited collections. Because what am I really contributing to this industry if I'm not using my platform to stand up for what is right? How can I ever expect to see change if I'm not doing my part in raising awareness of mistreatment and outdated perceptions? Over the years, one thing I've realized is that no matter how hard I push for fairness or equality, I can't make a difference alone. No one person can. It takes continuous allyship to truly effect change. In the beauty world, this calls for editors, publicists, marketing executives, and creative directors alike to take a good look around: At the faces in the room at brand events they attend. At the lack of minorities on set at the photo shoots they arrange. Then take a hard look in the mirror. Take a moment for self-reflection. And make an honest assessment of where they stand in all of this. It may call for them to ask themselves some tough questions. Like, Is there anything more that I can do to make this a more inclusive industry? Have I taken advantage of opportunities to speak out when I've noticed that there were no people of color on press trips? How would I feel if I were a minority trying to find my way in this industry? Have I been a part of the problem or the solution?

The truth is, I wouldn't have made it to where I am today without the genuine support of people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Along the way, I've had several white colleagues and mentors who have helped amplify my voice. Some who have said my name in rooms full of opportunities. And others who have become lifelong friends. That's why it's best to treat people the way you would want to be treated, regardless of their skin color. You never know: One day, the hand you refused to shake may turn out to be the same hand you reach out to for a favor.

Case in point: Six months ago, the same woman who had disrespected me in France all those years before sent me a glowing email, saying she thought our vibes were on similar levels and suggesting we should be friends. This time, I smiled. I didn't type what I wanted to. Instead, I was reminded of Michelle Obama's famous quote: "When they go low, we go high." The truth is, our vibes aren't on similar levels. I'm vibrating much higher. ■

BROWN ON ASSIGNMENT: COURTESY OF THE SUBJECT (3).

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Beauty

EDITORS' PICKS

1. Kim Kimble 2" Silk Quick Pass ($80)
If anyone knows her way around a flatiron, it's Kimble, the legendary hairstylist behind Beyoncé's iconic looks in *Lemonade*. Kimble's styler, with its "floating" plates (which move slightly as you use them) and beveled edges, can curl hair, too—and its special coating offers an effortless glide.

2. Pat McGrath Labs Dark Star Mascara ($30)
Channel Diana Ross's mile-long, fluttery lashes in the classic '70s film *Mahogany* with McGrath's newest mascara, a gel-cream formula with microfine pigments.

3. Baby Tress Edge Styler in Blush ($15)
Design wavy, swirled, and scooped edges with this three-in-one tool.

4. Eden BodyWorks Almond Marshmallow Therapy Leave In Conditioner ($9)
This milky spray slays at detangling and moisturizing loose to tight curls (think: 3A to 3C), and can also be used to freshen up coilier textures. Everyone will love the aroma.

5. Fenty Skin Fat Water Pore-Refining Toner Serum ($28)
Meet RiRi's favorite product in her debut skin-care range: Unlike typical toners, this hybrid fluid is a bit thicker (hence the name), pairing the efficacy of a serum with the pore-minimizing benefits of a toner.

6. Danessa Myricks Vision Flush in Cherry Bomb ($20)
These 12 cream colors can be used on eyes, lips, or cheeks. Intense pigmentation allows each shade to pop on even the deepest complexion.

7. Uoma Beauty Black Magic Carnival Eyelashes in Rio ($16)
Bling out your lash line with bedazzled falsies.

8. Oui the People Rose Gold Sensitive Skin Razor ($75)
Ditch razor burn and ingrown hairs with this single-blade, weighted safety razor, which removes hair without irritation.

9. Mischo Beauty Nail Lacquer in Rendezvous, Déjà Vu, and Obsessed ($20 each)
Kitiya Mischo King spent two years developing and self-funding her vegan, cruelty-free nail polish. Instead of adding dibutyl phthalate (DBP) to create a chip-resistant finish, King found an eco-friendly trio of resins to use instead.
—TAYLOR DAVIS

RING, MATEO, $850, MATEONEWYORK.COM. EARRINGS, WHITE SPACE, $750, WHITESPACE JEWELRY.COM. PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOHNNY MILLER.

BEST OF

SEPTEMBER

Innovative formulas, genius tools, and bold pigments created by *Black beauty* megastars and newcomers alike.

ADVERTISEMENT

CBD FOR YOUR PAIN

Everyone feels the hurt as you age, but CBD can help you deal with it.

Life really does fly by. Before I knew it, my 30ish had arrived, and with them came some new gifts from dear ol' Mother Nature—frequent stress, low energy and sleeplessness. Now, I'm a realist about these things, I knew I wasn't going to be young and springy forever. But still, with "middle-age" nearly on my doorstep, I couldn't help but feel a little cheated. That is until I found my own secret weapon. Another gift from Mother Nature.

It began a few months back when I was complaining about my stress to my marathon-running niece, Jen. She casually mentioned how she uses CBD oil to help with her. She said that CBD gave her more focus and clarity throughout the day and that her lingering muscle and joint discomfort no longer bothered her. She even felt comfortable signing up for back-to-back marathons two weekends in a row this year.

That made even this self-proclaimed skeptic take notice. But I still had some concerns. According to one study in the Journal of the American Medical Association, 70% of CBD products didn't contain the amount of CBD stated on their labels. And, as a consumer, that's terrifying!

If I was going to do this, I needed to trust the source through and through. My two-fold research process naturally led me to Zebra CBD.

First, I did a quick online poll—and by that, I mean I posed the CBD question on my Facebook page. Call me old fashioned but I wanted to know if there were people whom I trusted (more than anonymous testimonials) who've had success using CBD besides my niece. That is how I found out that Zebra CBD has a label accuracy guarantee which assures customers like me what is stated on the label is in the product.

Secondly, I wanted cold hard facts. Diving deep into the world of CBD research and clinical studies, I came across Emily Gray M.D., a physician at the University of California at San Diego (UCSD) Medical School and medical advisor to Zebra CBD who is researching the effects of CBD. Dr. Gray wrote "early results with CBD have been promising and we have a lot of research underway now. I've had several patients using CBD with good success. It's important that you know your source of CBD and how to use it properly."

After hearing it from the doctor's mouth, I returned to my online poll and was amazed by the number of close friends and family who were already on the CBD train. Apparently, I was the only one without a clue! And funny enough, a couple of friends who commented were using the same brand as my niece—Zebra CBD. There was no consensus as to why they were using CBD, but the top reasons given were for tension & stress, muscle & joint discomfort, mood support, sleep support, as well as supporting overall health & wellness.

Eventually, even the most skeptical of the bunch can be won over. With a trusted CBD source in mind, I decided to give it a go.

When I viewed Zebra CBD's selection online, I was impressed by its array of products, including CBD oils called tinctures, topicals, chewable tablets, mints and gummies. After reading on their website that all their products are made with organically-grown hemp, I ordered... and it arrived within 2 days!

The first product I tried was the rub. Now this stuff was strong. Immediately after rubbing it on my knee, the soothing effects kicked in. It had that familiar menthol cooling effect, which I personally find very relieving. And the best part is, after two weeks of using it, my knee pain no longer affected my daily mobility.

The Zebra Gummies, on the other hand, had a different but equally positive effect on my body. To take it, the instructions suggest chewing thoroughly. This was simple enough, and the taste was, well, lemony. After about 15 minutes, a sense of calm came over my body. It's hard to describe exactly; it's definitely not a "high" feeling. It's more like an overall sense of relaxation—a chill factor. Needless to say, I've really enjoyed the gummies.

While it hasn't been a catch-all fix the fact that I worry about everything, it has eased the level and frequency of tension. And it sure doesn't seem like a coincidence how much better I feel.

All-in-all, CBD is one of those things that you have to try for yourself. Although I was skeptical at first, I can safely say that I'm now a Zebra CBD fan and that I highly recommend their products.

Also, I managed to speak to a Zebra CBD representative and negotiate an exclusive offer. If you order this month, you'll receive $10 off your first order by using promo code "**ELLE10**" at checkout. You can try it yourself and order Zebra CBD at ZebraCBD.com.

DO IT IN YOUR SLEEP

The term *beauty sleep* isn't a misnomer: New studies show the latter is essential for preserving the former.

Imagine a podcast that gets around 3 million downloads a month, but no one is meant to listen to it. During Drew Ackerman's *Sleep With Me*, the host tells mind-numbing bedtime stories solely to put you to sleep. Not a bad business model, considering that up to 70 million Americans report some kind of sleep disorder, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (a number that could climb in 2020 as more people, particularly women, suffer from "racing mind," says sleep psychiatrist Eric Nofzinger, MD).

Getting at least seven hours of sleep is life-altering: It improves mental tenacity, coping ability, metabolism, and immune function. And if beauty is your motivation, there's incentive for your skin, too. A study published this year in the journal *Nature Cell Biology* confirms a direct link between hiccups in your circadian rhythms (the body's sleep, wake, and eat pattern) and the skin's ability to synthesize collagen. "Think of sleep as food and water for your skin," says New York dermatologist Whitney Bowe, MD. "When you disrupt the circadian rhythms, you're more susceptible to environmental damage. Chronic sleep deprivation can exacerbate acne and inflammation, and persistently high levels of cortisol will break down collagen."

While 25 percent of skin aging can be attributed to genetics, a whopping 75 percent is influenced by epigenetics, or environmental and lifestyle factors like sleep. When beauty company Estée Lauder commissioned a study to examine the relationship between poor sleep quality and accelerated skin aging, the results, published in the journal *Clinical and Experimental Dermatology* in 2014, prompted the brand to reformulate its iconic Advanced Night Repair Complex, which originally launched in 1982. The most dramatic change to the serum is a new "activator" (a blend of peptides and yeast extract) linked to the discovery of a tiny microsignaling molecule. "[In studies,] when we decreased the level of this molecule, skin's natural nightly repair signal also slowed down," says Estée Lauder's Nadine Pernodet, PhD, vice president of Skin Biology and BioActives Global Research and Development. The new activator is designed to send more of those skin-rejuvenating signals.

Skin is simply more receptive in the wee hours, when the rebuilding process kicks into high gear. The nighttime skin-care brand Bynacht uses aromatherapy to help you sleep while targeting inflammation. Naturopathica Holy Basil & Retinol Ageless Night Oil ($124) promotes repair with microalgae (which mitigates cortisol spikes) and retinol—key to improving radiance and reducing signs of aging.

As for actually shifting into sleep mode? "Your body is more likely to enter deep sleep if the temperature in your bedroom is on the cooler side," Bowe says. And don't hit Snooze. "If we spend too much time in bed beyond our real sleep need, our sleep becomes lighter and more fragmented as those precious sleep hours are distributed over a longer period," Nofzinger explains. Finally, don't go to bed unless you feel sleepy—"That wave of sleepiness is the optimal cue," says Nofzinger—and if you're not out after 30 minutes, get up and do something nonstimulating until the sensation returns. A boring bedtime story, perhaps?—**FIORELLA VALDESOLO**

EYES WIDE SHUT

Give your skin its best night of rest.

ESTÉE LAUDER ADVANCED NIGHT REPAIR SYNCHRONIZED MULTI-RECOVERY COMPLEX ($105)
The new formulation of the cult classic improves skin firmness.

EBB COOLDRIFT VERSA ($349)
Nofzinger's sleep research revealed that the "racing mind" associated with sleeplessness could be calmed by a cooling headband.

OSEA VAGUS NERVE OIL ($48)
When inhaled and massaged on the neck, this blend of essential oils triggers the parasympathetic nervous system, readying the body for sleep.

MODEL: NICOLAS KANTOR/TRUNK ARCHIVE; REMAINING IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE BRANDS.

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BACKSTAGE AT THE CAMPAIGN SHOOT (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT): SERGELY MERCILUS, MEI KAWAJIRI, AND STELLA JONES. RIGHT: MARC JACOBS.

PERFECT MARC JACOBS EAU DE PARFUM, MARC JACOBS, $128

PERFECT TIMING

Marc Jacobs's new fragrance plays on our ever-changing concept of perfection.

Marc Jacobs is wearing a baby blue sweater that appears, even through the Zoom screen's distortion, as soft as swansdown. He's accessorized it with a string of pearls, dark red nail polish, and a healthy amount of quarantine beard growth. "I'm in my element," the designer says of the Soho hotel room where he's been holed up during self-isolation. He describes it as a "giant closet" full of clothes and make-up to experiment with. "These inanimate things, this palette of stuff we choose to create our identity with," he says, "it's alive, and when it's not alive, I'm not interested."

Jacobs's exuberant quarantine looks and makeup "Too-Torials" have been giving his Instagram followers plenty of life. He's focused on elaborate eye makeup, since you can still showcase it while wearing a mask. The whole thing reminds him, he says, of playing dress-up as a kid. "It feels very naïve, very innocent—like how I got here in the first place. It's okay to express myself, do my own TV show, and live in my own movie."

The designer's imagination has always been unrivaled when it comes to creating his own worlds: Look at his seismic grunge show, which brought the Seattle subculture to the runway (to the horror of many fashion traditionalists of the time), or the all-dancing fantasia he concocted for fall 2020. Jacobs has always been an unconventional person drawn to unconventional beauties. Perfection doesn't seem like something that would really interest him, but in fact, his new fragrance, Perfect, serves as an examination of the idea in all its complexity. Jacobs inked the word *Perfect* on the inside of his right wrist after attending a rehab program where patients were given bracelets emblazoned with it. He's also fond of a saying from the *I Ching*, which, he says, changed his entire outlook: "I am a perfect being, in a perfect world, where everything that happens benefits me completely." He told the perfumers of Perfect these stories, rather than giving them scent-based cues. "I can't really dissect it and say, 'The daffodil represents perfect,'" he notes of the final product. He even went against the norm for his perfume bottle, molding his own version out of clay and asking people on his team to bring him "goodies and charms" to decorate the cap. He took the same charmingly DIY approach to the brand's ad campaign, where he cast 15 diverse aspirants culled from social media, after asking them a series of questions like "What is a perfect meal for you?" and "What does your perfect day look like?"

We're at an interesting inflection point for the idea of perfection. In some ways, the definition of beauty is broadening to encompass more racial diversity and a range of body types, though we certainly have far to go on both fronts. At the same time, it's constricting, thanks to our addiction to filters and Facetune, and our attempts to use injections and surgery to emulate their glossy effects. Jacobs says he isn't a big believer in filtering out so-called flaws. He spends two and a half hours in the bathroom every morning getting ready, he says, "creating this person I want people to see," but he draws the line at digital manipulation. "You can use [filters] in a way that's playful, to project different versions of yourself, but if you use it to hide behind or cover up what you're unhappy with, then it's a sad thing."

"*Self-acceptance* I find very troubling as a phrase," he confides. "Because it feels like a compromise: 'I accept myself.' No, how about 'I celebrate myself as I am'?" He hopes the fragrance will help people do that in whatever way makes sense for them. "I've always said clothes mean nothing until somebody wears them. Well, a bottle of perfume doesn't mean anything until someone wears it."—**VÉRONIQUE HYLAND**

JACOBS: BEN ROSSER/BFA; REMAINING IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE DESIGNER.

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"I want women to know that the world is incredibly diverse and that anything is possible if you have a drive to succeed and confidence in yourself."

the INFLUENTIALS

Jill Wallace still managed to look über-chic while quarantining. (See: her Instagram, **@littleblackboots**, where she shared a snap wearing a t-shirt dress, black menswear blazer, knee-high leather boots and a protective face mask.) Good style is just part of the Los Angeles native's DNA. When she's not getting lost in a new city and creating music playlists, she's sharing curated fashion and beauty picks with her followers on her blog, Little Black Boots. Here, she spills her makeup bag, highlighting her must-have beauty products for fall.

1

2

4

"Bold color, like the shade Power Play from Merle Norman, is an instant mood booster. I love embracing and showing off my full lips with a pouty look."

3

"I apply 3–4 drops of GrandeHAIR Enhancing Serum on my hairline as the last step of my nightly beauty routine. It gives added thickness and volume, especially at my roots."

5

6

JILL'S FALL MUST-HAVES

1, 2 ,3 GRANDE COSMETICS, *GrandeHAIR Enhancing Serum, $125; GrandeLIPS Hydrating Lip Plumper, $27; GrandeREPAIR Leave-In Lash Conditioner, $25; GrandeBROW Brow Enhancing Serum, $70; GrandeLASH-MD Lash Enhancing Serum, $65; ulta.com*

4, 5, 6 MERLE NORMAN COSMETICS, *Plush Lipstick in Power Play, $25; Pro Pen Eyeliner in Sharp Black, $20; Plush Lipstick in Upbeat, $25; 24k Gold Firming Foundation Primer, $70; merlenorman.com*

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House Call

Separated from our doctors for months, we've morphed into *power DIYers*. Here, dermatologists suggest safe and effective *at-home treatments* to complement the top in-office procedures.

THE GOAL	IN-OFFICE	AT HOME

Reduce Wrinkles

Botox may have become the common shorthand for injectables, but it's just one brand of several FDA-approved **neurotoxins**, including Dysport, Xeomin, and Jeuveau. When injected into muscles, the chemicals stop movement, relaxing dynamic wrinkles (aka the ones that show up when you make expressions). Though they have other applications, neurotoxins are typically used to smooth forehead frown lines and crow's-feet. It can take up to a week to see results, which may last three to six months—although some doctors claim injectables can prevent wrinkles from forming in the first place. Prices range from $250 to $600 and up, depending on how much is used, the area treated, and your location and provider.

No cream can stop muscle movement, but retinoids remain the gold standard for generating collagen and smoothing wrinkles over time, says New York dermatologist Anne Chapas, MD. Ask your derm for an Rx, or choose an over-the-counter formula. Retinoids can be drying, so Chapas recommends **Skinbetter Science AlphaRet Overnight Cream ($125)**, with ceramides and fatty acids that make it well tolerated. **L'Oréal Paris Revitalift Derm Intensives 0.3% Pure Retinol Serum ($38)** is also balanced with hydrators. Overnight silicone patches like **SiO BrowLift ($25)** "actually limit movement like Botox does, so they can leave skin smoother [for about 24 hours]," says New York dermatologist Dendy Engelman, MD.

Lift and Firm Skin

Fillers are injected to replace plumpness lost due to aging or to add fullness based on personal preference. While the FDA has approved fillers only for the lips, chin, and nasolabial folds, doctors have license to use them off-label anywhere on the face. The vast majority of fillers used today are made up of dense versions of hyaluronic acid, a type of sugar that is naturally produced in the body and dissipates slowly. Juvéderm and Restylane are two popular brands that come in a variety of densities depending on where they are used—lips, cheeks, under eyes, or jawline. Prices start at $650 to $950.

Applying hyaluronic acid topically won't give you the same results as a filler, but it does help. "Hyaluronic acid is a humectant that temporarily plumps the skin by hydration," Chapas says. Try a hyaluronic acid–based serum or mask, such as **Neutrogena Hydro Boost Hyaluronic Acid Serum ($24)**. For a sculpted effect, some pros like nano and microcurrent devices, such as the **NuFace Trinity Facial Toning Device ($325)** and the **Ziip GX ($495)**. Directing gentle currents deep into the skin stimulates muscle contractions—like a workout for your face, Engelman says—and increases collagen and elastin over time to tighten skin.

Even Out Texture and Tone

Lasers can correct redness, lighten dark spots, and resurface wrinkles. Different wavelengths cause different reactions and can be calibrated for every skin tone, explains New York dermatologist Dhaval Bhanusali, MD. The lasers beam energy into skin, creating controlled damage that prompts the release of a cascade of skin and collagen repair cells, ultimately leaving skin clearer and smoother. Those with darker skin tones should research their practitioner carefully, Bhanusali says, as hyperpigmentation (dark marks) is more likely during healing. It often takes multiple sessions, but results can last months or years, depending on how you care for your skin afterward. Prices vary widely by treatment, from the low hundreds to the thousands.

Mele Even Dark Spot Control Serum ($24), which is formulated for medium to dark skin, uses niacinamide and retinol to reduce marks caused by the sun or acne. Los Angeles dermatologist Jason Emer, MD, recommends a weekly facial routine for all skin tones: After cleansing with an exfoliating wash, layer on a serum with growth factors. "Stem cells help skin repair itself, and eventually you'll see fewer wrinkles and less hyperpigmentation," Emer says. ELLE likes **SkinMedica TNS Advanced + Serum ($295)**. Follow with a microneedling roller—gently—and finish with a hydrating mask. You can also invest in a lower-energy at-home laser. The **LYMA Laser ($2,500)** can reduce pigmentation and wrinkles in five weeks. —**CRYSTAL MARTIN**

BACKGROUND: MARK WINDOM/STOCKSY; REMAINING IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE BRANDS.

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gives you lasting care for the skin you live in.

GROUP CHAT

AT-HOME HAIR COLOR

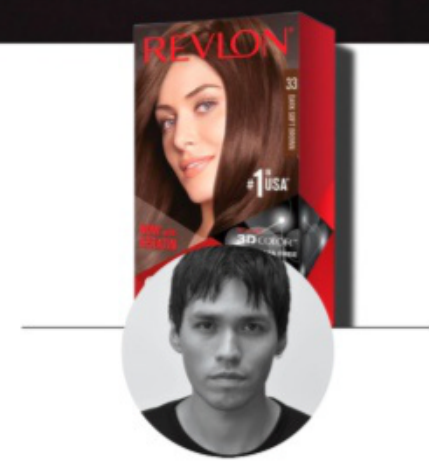
Sometimes our own bathroom is the only salon we've got, so we asked hair pros to highlight their *favorite dyes* and share *DIY secrets*.

JENNA PERRY
@jennaperryhair
Celebrity hair colorist
Clients: Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, Bella Hadid, Ashley Olsen

"I discovered L'Oréal Paris Magic Root Rescue 10 Minute Root Hair Coloring Kit ($7) while researching root cover-ups for my mom. It's low-ammonia, covers grays, and comes in multiple shades. I love that the applicator bottle and brush are combined—it makes application clean and uncomplicated. First, part your hair in the middle, then work your way out in quarter-inch sections, saturating both sides of the roots. Use mirrors to see the back of your head as you apply the color. When you're finished, touch up the hairline—it's the most important, because everybody can see it."

SARAH POTEMPA
@sarahpotempa
Celebrity hairstylist and inventor of the Beachwaver
Clients: Camila Cabello, Reese Witherspoon, Busy Philipps

"Overtone Coloring Conditioner in Pastel Pink ($29) deep-treats hair as it adds semipermanent color—unlike many dyes, which only focus on changing the color. I like this pink tone because it's so happy! It can dye all shades of hair. For allover color, apply it once a week to dry hair in sections, and brush it through with a detangling brush. To maintain brightness, mix it with your everyday conditioner and leave it on for three minutes. Rinse with cool water, and blow-dry on cool to help close the cuticle and lock in the color."



EVANIE FRAUSTO
@evaniefrausto
Celebrity hairstylist
Clients: Kendall Jenner, Alexa Demie, Paloma Elsesser

"Revlon ColorSilk Beautiful Color ($4) has been my dye of choice since I was 13. I recently used it to go from blond back to my natural black hair, and I love that it has great coverage for simple dye jobs and makes my hair feel healthier. Start by brushing out your hair, then apply Vaseline around the hairline and ears to avoid staining your skin. The key to a good dye job is using the right amount of product: You want your hair to be saturated, but not dripping. Always wear gloves, and use your fingers to make sure the dye is [distributed] everywhere."**—MARGAUX ANBOUBA**

HOLD THE PHONE

When salons closed due to COVID-19, celebrity colorist *Jaxcee* (@Jaxcee) turned her Ridgewood, Queens, apartment into a de facto mixing lab. "New clients showed me their roots via FaceTime, then I created a custom kit with salon-quality dye," says the Coily Collective cofounder, whose clients include Jill Scott. "I also made a how-to video—it was the first time I'd ever covered my own grays!"

MODEL: MARTA BEVACQUA/TRUNK ARCHIVE; HEADSHOTS: COURTESY OF THE SUBJECTS; PRODUCTS: COURTESY OF THE BRANDS.

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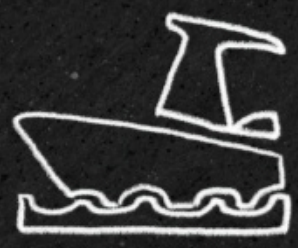
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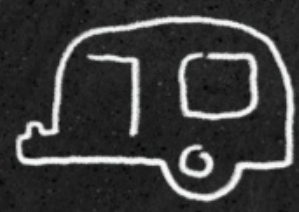
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THE ART OF THE OBAMA ERA

In his new book, *Designing History*, White House interior designer *Michael Smith* explores how the former First Couple modernized the presidential art collection.

By Ned Martel

OBAMA WITH BRIDGES: COURTESY OF THE BARACK OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY; FAMILY DINING ROOM: MICHAEL MUNDY.

WHEN THE NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM LOANED ROCKWELL'S *THE PROBLEM WE ALL LIVE WITH* (1964) TO THE WHITE HOUSE, PRESIDENT OBAMA INVITED CIVIL RIGHTS ICON RUBY BRIDGES, THE YOUNG GIRL PORTRAYED IN THE PAINTING, TO VIEW IT.

TWO PAINTINGS BY ABSTRACT ARTIST JOSEF ALBERS HANG IN THE FAMILY DINING ROOM. FROM TOP: *HOMAGE TO THE SQUARE: ELECTED II* (1961) AND *HOMAGE TO THE SQUARE: MIDDAY* (1957), BOTH LOANED BY THE SMITHSONIAN'S HIRSHHORN MUSEUM.

MICHAEL SMITH once picked a fight with Barack Obama. Smith, the First Family's interior designer, argued that red curtains were the perfect choice for the Oval Office. Obama disagreed. Presidents, of late, had gone with yellow or blue. Smith dug in, and others chimed in. Was this about fabric, or something else?

The answer quickly became clear—this debate was about power. In photographs, Smith explained, an incoming president who looked like none before him would best be framed by this potent color, suggesting strength, purpose, even heroism. When it comes to decor, Smith means business, and here Obama demonstrated his no-drama style: If you hire an expert, listen to him.

"Barn red," Smith called his curtains. Suddenly, they sounded pastoral—no echoes of Belle Watling or Buckingham Palace. Then, flanking the curtains, the designer added two sunny paintings of Cape Cod barns by Edward Hopper, a favorite of the president's. They belonged on the walls, at the dawn of the Obama administration, because of their Americana calmness and playful shapes.

Smith often connects to people through places. For example, he is from Pasadena, and the president is from Honolulu. The two men are roughly the same age. The president likes golf, and the designer likes country clubs. They have a Pacific view that America was strengthened as much by its frontier mentality as its Establishment ethos. "When you grow up in California, you are basically suspicious of anything that seems formal or representational," says Smith, noting that the president, though thoroughly Ivy League, spent his first two years of college at Occidental in L.A. "Rooms that are meant to impress, to be patriotic, to be heroic—you're suspicious of them," Smith adds.

The artwork they borrowed, mostly from federal museums, showed how *diverse artists* could hang together — and *redefined who belonged* in the White House.

"There are few instances when they are used for good."

President Obama and Smith developed a joshing rapport, like the hot and cold personalities in a buddy movie. Smith began to appreciate the president's bent for modernism, and the president was awed by the White House's neoclassical architecture, once he started living within its walls. With the First Lady leading their joint conversations and explaining their decisions to the public, the three brought together different and distinctly American ways of seeing the world, all under one roof.

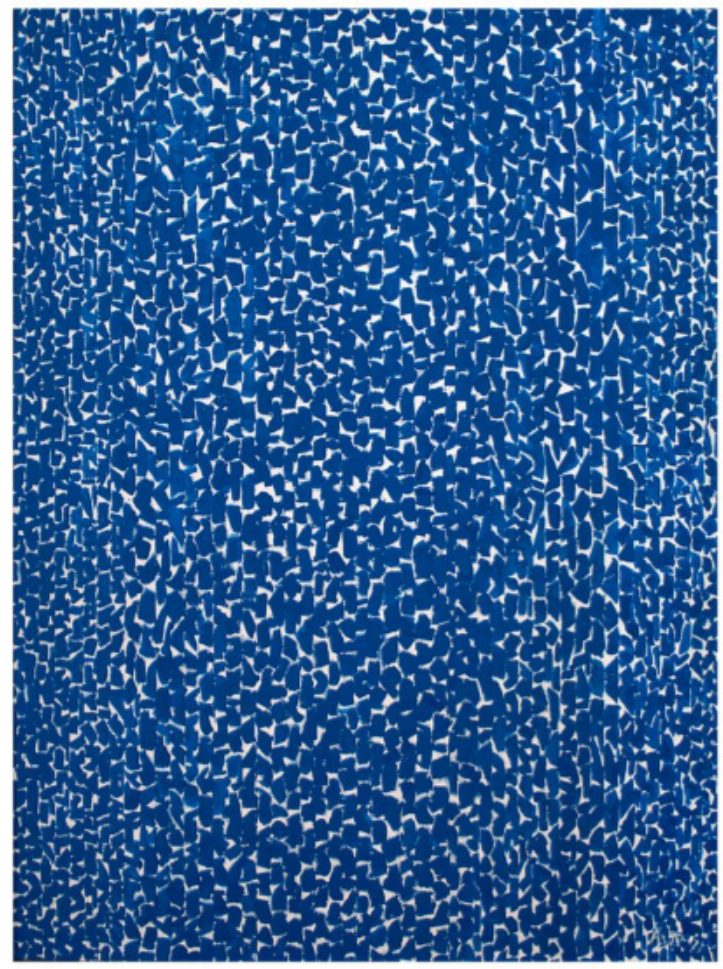
Smith's new book reveals the White House's private spaces, and reminds aficionados and everyday Americans that Smith and the Obamas were really onto something. The artwork they borrowed, mostly from federal museums, showed how diverse artists and styles and eras could hang together—and redefined who belonged in the White House.

In 2009, when the Obamas announced their list of loaned artworks, the name that drew gasps was Glenn Ligon's. The contemporary-art agitator, who is African American and gay, repeated a stenciled sentence that gets denser and darker in his work *Black Like Me #2*: "All traces of the John Griffin I had been were wiped from existence." Ligon is sampling John Howard Griffin, the white journalist and author who changed his skin pigment, elaborately, so he could pass as African American. The art world was electrified—the Obamas had jumped into a roiling debate and declared that the time had come for new images, new visionaries, new juxtapositions.

"It's not about the specific artists, but the broad strokes of the spaces," Smith says now, years after the Obamas returned the art. He is proud, for example, of paintings by George Catlin, featuring colorful Native Americans riding at full gallop, not just for their historical value but because Mrs. Obama put them in the Treaty Room, across from an equine painting by Susan Rothenberg with a rose-colored background. It's as if all the pretty horses, from the last century and the one before, got corralled together.

The Obamas chose quieter and no-less-bold work to hang near a Monet outside their master bedroom: a bright blue canvas called *Sky Light*. Color-field artist Alma Thomas had arranged these big dabs of paint in loose columns, in her kitchen studio only a short distance from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, in the years after Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. After elevating the first-ever African American female artist to be featured in the White House collection, the Obamas wanted to do even more.

BELOW: ALMA THOMAS'S *SKY LIGHT* (1973), ON LOAN FROM THE HIRSHHORN MUSEUM, HANGS IN THE CENTER HALL. RIGHT: SEAN SCULLY'S *ONEONEZERONINE RED* (2009), BORROWED FROM THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, IS DISPLAYED IN THE FAMILY SITTING ROOM.



ABOVE: SMITH COMPILED BINDERS OF POTENTIAL MUSEUM LOANS FOR THE PRESIDENT AND FIRST LADY TO CONSIDER.

Next, they gave Smith the Old Family Dining Room to reconsider—a flex-space, spillover room that was often home to catering carts. The First Couple refreshed the decor with a Machine Age tea service, a monumental Rauschenberg, two Josef Albers paintings, and a rug adapted from a weaving by Anni Albers.

"This is artwork that should stop you in your tracks for a moment," explains Adam Weinberg, who runs the Whitney Museum, which loaned the Hopper barns to the Obamas. All the grace notes "are channeling the Obamas' idea of hope, by not just looking back at the past but also embracing the present." Suddenly, the room had new purpose, for walking tours and friends and staff Seder meals, and the first thing anyone saw was another stunner by Thomas—her rainbow-hued *Resurrection*, a bright eye watching over a room once dismissed as unworthy.

Smith's book lingers on one Norman Rockwell painting that hung for a while in the West Wing. It has one of the most racist epithets for a Black person scrawled on a wall above a little Black girl walking to school. The president invited Ruby Bridges, the school-integration pioneer–turned–activist, to come see it. She is the grown-up who was once the girl on her way to school in New Orleans, and the art became a mirror.

When the president chose barn red curtains, he also opened the symbolic barn doors to present "not himself as a person but America as a people," as Smith puts it. Those Hopper barns, Weinberg says, are not only contemplative, and sort of modernist; they were also painted by a staunch Yankee Republican who rarely interrupted his summer idyll in Truro, except once: to make sure he could vote against Franklin Roosevelt.

President Obama often tried to win over those who voted against him. Mrs. Obama similarly let everyone know that the White House was open to all, especially anyone who assumed that they were not welcome. Inside their home at the White House, through the First Family's taste and tact, Americans were able to see—finally and completely—a house full of paintings that reflected who we all are. Black artists next to white peers, women expressing themselves with the same force as men, someone gone and unsung celebrated with someone just breaking through.

And that painful, pretty Rockwell, entitled *The Problem We All Live With*. ■

SKY LIGHT BY ALMA THOMAS, COURTESY OF LEE STALSWORTH AND THE HIRSHHORN MUSUEM AND SCULPTURE GARDEN; FAMILY SITTING ROOM: MICHAEL MUNDY; BINDER: ROGER DAVIES.

SMOLLETT: BRIAN BOWEN SMITH/AUGUST (STYLED BY ALI MANDELKORN; HAIR CONSULTANT: NIKKI NELMS; MAKEUP CONSULTANT: VINCENT OQUENDO).

JURNEE SMOLLETT

The actress and activist battles racism and other demons in HBO's new social thriller *Lovecraft Country*.

TWO EPIDEMICS—the coronavirus and systemic racism—have spread across the United States, and Jurnee Smollett, like most Black people, is still trying to process them. "It's a time of shifts, it's a time of change, it's a time of detox," says the 33-year-old actress and activist in late June. "It's a rest, yet it's also filled with so much mourning and this collective grief that I know we're all experiencing."

She's calling from California, a state that has seen a spike in COVID-19 cases in recent days, to talk about her latest project: *Lovecraft Country*, a new drama series premiering August 16 on HBO. The show, which takes place in 1950s Jim Crow America, feels disturbingly—but not unsurprisingly—timely. "The unfortunate thing about our nation is that [*Lovecraft*] could have been released on any day, in any month, of any year since 1619," Smollett says, "and arguably, what we explore in this show would be relevant."

Based on Matt Ruff's 2016 fantasy horror novel of the same name, *Lovecraft Country* follows Atticus, a young black man played by Jonathan Majors, on a road trip to New England in search of his father. Smollett plays Letitia, Atticus's feisty, forthright friend, who joins him and his Uncle George (played by Courtney B. Vance) on the journey. Along the way, the three encounter a plague of monsters—some human, some supernatural creatures that could have been conjured by horror author H. P. Lovecraft himself. "Our heroes go on a mission to bring down these powers, which happen to be white supremacy," Smollett says.

Born in New York City, Smollett spent her childhood in New York and L.A., raised by a white Jewish father and Black mother who'd met through civil rights activism. One of Smollett's earliest memories was of standing on a corner holding a protest sign after the police who'd beaten Rodney King were acquitted. Around the same time, she was also becoming well known to a generation of television viewers as Denise in *Full House*, and Jordee in *On Our Own* (she starred alongside real-life siblings Jussie, Jake, Jazz, Jocqi, and Jojo in the latter). At age 11, Smollett won a Critics' Choice Award for her title role in *Eve's Bayou*; at 12, she volunteered for Artists for a New South Africa, a nonprofit that assists children orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

Smollett recalls a childhood of art, activism, and straddling the line between poverty and working-class. "Oftentimes, when we could afford to live in a certain neighborhood, we were the only Black family," she says. She drew from this personal history while working on *Lovecraft*'s third episode, in which her character renovates a large, rundown home in a white neighborhood with hopes of turning it into a boardinghouse—unleashing demonic forces in the process. "You cannot buy yourself out of systemic racism," Smollett says.

Earlier this year, Smollett starred in *Birds of Prey* and in an episode of Jordan Peele's *The Twilight Zone*. She's also been an active participant in the L.A. chapter of Black Lives Matter, and is a founding board member of Time's Up. The actress hopes to raise Hunter, her three-year-old son with singer-songwriter Josiah Bell, with a similar drive to serve others. "I intend for Hunter to have a deeper understanding, a deeper consciousness," she says. "We are ever-evolving and expanding as a society, and [we must] create space for every single person and every identity, ability, and gender identity."

Aside from being "a terrific actress, [Smollett] is just electric and amazing to watch," says J. J. Abrams, who co–executive produced *Lovecraft* alongside Peele, Misha Green, and four others. "She's got an incredible strength, both on screen and off." Green, who also serves as showrunner, met Smollett on their previous show together, WGN America's Civil War drama *Underground*. Green says Letitia runs through Smollett's veins: "At the end of the day, Jurnee happens to be perfect for [the role] because [she and Letitia] have that same vibe of the fight and the power of what it means to be a Black woman—and looking things in the face."

Indeed, Smollett feels "a visceral, ancestral connection to the oppression of my people, but also a connection to the uprising—we are survivors," she says. "[Letitia] believes in disrupting the system. It's so bold, so audacious, because that era was bent on erasing us, but she will not be erased."—BRITT JULIOUS

KATIE PORTER IS ALL OF US

The freshman lawmaker and YouTube star on the class divide in Congress: "I just want to scream at people like, '*My life does not look like yours!*'"

By Kayla Webley Adler

When Representative Katie Porter's face appears on my laptop screen, backdropped by the marigold walls of her kitchen, I can instantly tell she's having a *day*. She's overwhelmed, weary, pulsating with the frantic energy of a person doing too much. It's April 9, or day 21 since Porter more or less locked herself inside like much of the rest of the country, and yes, we are Zooming. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I'd speak with a member of Congress while unshowered, makeup-free, and in sweatpants, but here we are. And for a moment, we are not reporter and politician, but two women who find themselves in the middle of an unprecedented global pandemic, and one of us clearly needs a minute.

Like many, Porter is exhausted from all the digital demands. "One's a call, one's a Zoom, one requires me to be dressed up, another might require me to, *God forbid*, have my hair done...." And frankly, she's a bit miffed with staffers who schedule back-to-back meetings, failing to recognize that even Porter—a woman whose colleagues call her a superwoman, who has made drowsy congressional hearings must-see TV, and who so expertly spars with witnesses that you can almost see them quiver—also needs a break to pee sometimes.

As she pulls on an Elizabeth Warren presidential campaign hoodie ("I hope Joe's hoodies are as cozy as this is") and pops in AirPods to drown out her children, she begins to sound like the Porter I've come to know from YouTube. She illustrates how COVID-19 has magnified existing workplace inequalities as only she could: by relying on props. "There are all these little assumptions," says Porter, 46. "Like, 'Well, just print it.'" She has a printer; it's 14 years old. "I'm happy to show it to you," she says, angling her camera so I can see it: a bland gray box, like the one those guys beat the shit out of in *Office Space*. "Do you see it? It was a gift. When my son was born, my mother gave it to me." Her colleagues say, "Could you adjust your monitor?" "No, I can't," she deadpans. "I don't have a desktop computer. I don't have space for one. I've got three kids in California. We don't have extra rooms full of shit." They say, "How's your home office set up?" "It's my kitchen, okay?!" she says, giving me a tour.

The room is not flashy or slick; there's no island or subway tile. Instead, it looks very much like the kitchen of any average American household: food items strewn about, dishes in the sink, and one overworked woman—the only single mom of young children in Congress—trying to hold it together. "For anybody with kids, their work level shot through the roof during this pandemic," Porter says. "Some people are sitting around watching videos. I haven't turned my TV on." She mentions a colleague who failed to reply to a question on her last call. "He couldn't answer because he was riding his Peloton and had to get off because he was out of breath," she says of the $2,000-plus exercise bike, with a pointed stare. "I'm like, No words, right?

"Look," she continues. "I'm acutely aware I'm nowhere near the bottom, but there's a little bit of difference between my situation and the typical Congress member's, or, let's face it, a *lot* of difference. I didn't get elected because I'm rich and able to self-fund. I haven't been in office for 20 years. And I'm about 15 years younger than the average member. All those things make me more attuned to the inequality of the universe. I'm at least aware, as I put on my shoes every day, that they are not like everyone else's.

"I just want to scream at people like, '*My life does not look like yours!*'"

And with that, Porter is ready to move on. "Thank you for letting me vent," she says. "I feel much better."

In late January, one of the first confirmed cases of coronavirus in the U.S. was reported in Porter's district: south-central Orange County, a Republican stronghold that, until Porter, had never elected a Democrat. She wrote to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to request a briefing and put together a list of frequently asked questions for constituents. "We recognized instantly that the biggest shortage—more than TP, more than ventilators—was going to be accurate and trustworthy information," she says.

When Congress began hosting regular briefings in early February, Porter says, they were "extremely poorly attended." Over time, the numbers swelled, and by March 12, when CDC director Robert Redfield, MD, testifies before the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, the room is overflowing. "Everybody was like, 'This is outrageous! We couldn't even get a room that was big enough. Who planned this?'" Porter says. "And I wanted to say, 'Where were you in February? Because the reason it's in this small room is that's who's been showing up.'"

When Redfield takes his seat, Porter is ready. The week before, she had sent a letter to his boss, Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Alex Azar, urging him to take action to ensure COVID tests were affordable, but hadn't received a reply. As Porter's five minutes commences, she pulls out a small whiteboard and begins quizzing Robert Kadlec, MD, assistant secretary for preparedness and response at HHS, about the out-of-pocket costs, without insurance, of the tests to determine if a person has COVID-19 and an ER visit to care for someone with such symptoms. "This is like *The Price Is Right*," she says as Kadlec repeatedly guesses too high. She could have just told him that she'd crunched the numbers and found the total was $1,331, but subtly shaming witnesses for not having done their homework is one of her signature moves.

Eventually, she makes her point: "Fear of these costs is going to keep people from being tested, from getting the care they need, and from keeping their communities safe," she says, rattling off the statistics that 40 percent of Americans can't afford even a $400

HAIR AND MAKEUP BY NICOLE CHEW FOR ORIBE AND CHANEL.

DRESS, LAFAYETTE 148 NEW YORK, $598. HER OWN JEWELRY, WORN THROUGHOUT. PHOTOGRAPHED BY AMY HARRITY

unexpected expense and that 33 percent put off medical treatment last year. Then she shifts her laser-like focus to Redfield, asking him if he will guarantee free tests for all Americans. He starts to reply: "Well, I can say that we're going to do everything to make sure everybody can get the care they need...." Porter cuts him off: "Nope. Not good enough." They go back and forth like this for a bit, with Porter insisting on a simple yes or no. Instead, Redfield says, "What I was trying to say is that CDC is working with HHS now to see how we operationalize that...."

Here's a thing you need to know about Porter: She really hates words like *operationalize*. Her office has a policy that all communications to the public be at an eighth-grade level, and she has explicitly banned her least favorite word, *impacted*. "People are not impacted by the pandemic, okay?" Porter tells me. "They are sickened, they are laid off, they are hurt, they are scared, whatever. Impacting is what meteorites do when they land on a planet."

So by now, Porter is not mad, but disappointed, and as everyone knows, that's worse. Not only has Redfield dodged her question, he has dared to use mumbo jumbo in her presence. She looks him in the eye and says, in that guilt-inducing tone every mom has mastered, "Dr. Redfield, I hope that that answer weighs heavily on you, because it is going to weigh very heavily on me and on every American family." It works; Redfield relents—you can almost see him thinking, "*Fiiiiine*, I'll give you what you want"—as he says, "I think you're an excellent questioner, so my answer is yes." Porter seizes the moment: "Excellent!" she says, reiterating the point to make sure all Americans heard they are eligible for free testing.

They had. The clip shot around the internet, casting Porter as an early hero of the COVID crisis: "I'm Representative Katie Porter's Whiteboard, and My Girl and I Are About to Kick Your Ass," a headline on McSweeney's read. It helped her raise money for her reelection, too—over $2 million in the first quarter of 2020, more than any House member in a battleground district.

Porter has watched her exchange with Redfield a couple of times, and that part at the end where she makes sure she's been heard is what stands out to her most. "Hearings are not conversations between two people in power," she says. "The audience is the American people." Every congressperson would claim to understand that, but Porter is one of few who demonstrate it. Her colleagues pontificate; she instructs, with graphs and poster board, if necessary.

"The most important thing about Katie is that she has this superpower, which allows her to do a searing cross-examination and get the jewel," says Linda Lipsen, CEO of the American Association for Justice, a lobbying organization for trial lawyers. "It takes experienced trial lawyers days sometimes to do that, and she can do it in five minutes." But the key to her appeal is not just that she is a skilled questioner; it's that when she is skewering JPMorgan Chase CEO and chairman of the board Jamie Dimon, HUD Secretary Ben Carson, or Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, she isn't just speaking to the American people—she is speaking *for* us. Porter is our collective rage personified. And damn, if it doesn't feel good to see her make witnesses squirm.

When Porter and I Zoom for the second time a day later, it's 9:15 a.m. in California, and she's still making breakfast for her kids. She had early calls this morning, so the meal is delayed, and she's behind on emails. "The hard thing about living on the West Coast is that nobody cares about you," Porter says. "They start sending you emails at, like, 8:30 a.m., asking why you haven't responded." (And no, her tardiness is not caused by less pressing things: "I'm not baking any bread, people," she says.)

Porter isn't just speaking to the American people, she's speaking *for* us. She's our collective rage personified. And damn, if it doesn't feel good to see her make witnesses squirm.

It's fitting to be interviewing the viral hit maker via video. After all, that is how America got to know Porter. She shot to public consciousness in late February 2019—nearly two months after she was sworn in to Congress on her forty-fifth birthday—when clips of her asking Mark Begor, the CEO of Equifax, if he would be willing to share his Social Security number, birth date, and address at a hearing began making the rounds online. When he declined, Porter used his reply to point out the hypocrisy of the company's argument that consumers weren't hurt by the data breach—one of the largest in history, which exposed the personal information of as many as 143 million people, or about half the country. Headlines like "Watch a Congresswoman Destroy Equifax CEO Mark Begor in an Epic Privacy Burn" followed.

Porter did it again two weeks later, when Wells Fargo CEO Tim Sloan testified about the bank's consumer abuse scandal in 2016. She used her now-famous props to show how the company's official response contradicted what Sloan had told the committee. He resigned two weeks later. By April, when it was Dimon's turn in the hot seat, it was understood that eviscerating witnesses is just what Porter does. Her colleague Ayanna Pressley (D–Mass.), a fellow freshman, says Porter's communication skills stood out to her from the start. "My first impression was that she was Superwoman," Pressley says. "She could speak about very complicated things and make them digestible and interesting."

This is how she does it: Porter starts by asking, "What is the problem we're trying to solve?" She games it out with her staff, anticipating how a witness may respond. Still, nothing can fully prepare Porter for when it's her time to shine. "Whenever I hear them say, 'The gentlelady from California is now recognized,' my heart kind of stops," she says.

While some members of Congress drone on without ever really making a point, Porter feels pressure to make each second count. "I definitely get nervous, because I know it's my one shot." During questioning, she doesn't see or hear anyone else in the room. "I've often wondered, 'What are the other witnesses doing? How are they reacting?' I don't know," Porter says. And she also has no clue how she performed, even when she nails it. "When I'm walking out, I'll ask my staff, 'How do you think it went?,' and they'll be like, 'Oh my God, it's already blowing up.' And I'm like, 'It is?!'"

But going viral isn't just Porter's way of speaking to the public; it is also how she found her place in a 535-member body where it's tough for anyone, let alone a lowly freshman, to stand out. About a month into Porter's tenure, Senator Elizabeth Warren, her former law school professor and mentor, called to see how she was doing. "I said, 'Okay, I guess. Not that great,'" Porter recalls. It was a stressful time in DC: The government was shut down, and all the negotiations were happening at higher levels. "I said to Elizabeth, 'I don't feel like I've found out how to make a difference.'"

About a month later, after Porter's star turns with the Equifax and Wells Fargo CEOs, Warren called again. "She said, 'You found your voice. Don't ever stop using it,'" Porter says.

"I love the way Katie approaches hearings," Warren tells me. "It isn't gratuitous. She never goes for the cheap shot. She never gets flustered. But she knows who she is there to fight for, and the people she's fighting for need someone on their side."

There's a reason Porter cares so much about making the public feel heard. As a kid growing up outside Lorimor, Iowa (2020 population estimate: 352), during the 1980s farm crisis—which, at the time, was the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression—Porter

DRESS, M.M.LAFLEUR, $195. PUMPS, MANOLO BLAHNIK, $745. FOR DETAILS, SEE SHOPPING GUIDE.

remembers a chasm between politicians on TV saying, "We care about farmers," and the devastation she saw all around her: families losing farms, people committing suicide. "So many politicians would come to my tiny town—they'd be at the Lions Club or the Pizza Ranch—but when we got in really bad trouble, nobody came," she says. "They want your vote, but then, when you need them, they're not there."

"Believe it or not," Porter says, it was an internship in Senator Chuck Grassley's office, the state's long-serving Republican senator, during college that taught her about the type of legislator she wanted to be. "He had a policy of writing back to every single constituent and doing what they call the Full Grassley, which is visiting all 99 counties in Iowa every year," she says. "Those things made a big impression on me about how important it is to listen."

But the truth is, Porter doesn't need to take calls from constituents to know what ordinary people are going through. She doesn't rely on staffers to tell her what it's like out there with the general public; she's at the grocery store with them. When she was sick with COVID-like symptoms in March, she was scared, thinking about what would happen to her kids if she died ("A particularly unique fear among single parents," she says). And when she heard about reports of domestic violence during the pandemic, she felt that, too. "A lot of the worst things that happened in my marriage happened because of the acute stress of the divorce and life changes," she says. "That's not unlike the stresses that some people are facing now with COVID."

She now has custody of her and her ex-husband's three children: Luke, 14; Paul, 12; and Betsy, 8, who is named after Warren. "Katie understands deep down what it's like to do your best and get caught up in a bigger wave that knocks you over," Warren says. "She's resilient—she bounces back, but she never forgets what it was like to be down."

That understanding, that memory, that daily reality of being the one in charge of getting three other humans through the day, and the exhaustion that comes with it, is also what makes her relatable. "When she says, 'My hair is frizzy, the kids are hungry, and dinner is burning,' everyone understands that," Pressley says. "Yes, she is brilliant, smart, extraordinary, and accomplished, but you can see yourself in her. She is everywoman."

Sure, Porter may have attended the prestigious Phillips Academy Andover, Yale University, and Harvard Law, but she didn't start out that way. She and her three siblings grew up in a two-bedroom, one-bathroom house built by her great-grandfather. Her father was a third-generation farmer; her mom hosted the public-access show *Love of Quilting*. In a town so small there were only 13 people in her grade in elementary school, she was an outlier when she applied to Andover. "It was very risky," she says. "No one had ever heard of that." But she wanted more from her education. "I mean, my sixth-grade textbook said, 'One day man may reach the moon,'" she says.

Her first night at Andover, she traded stories with her roommate, who came from Naples, Florida, one of the wealthiest cities in the U.S. "I don't think she was trying to make me feel bad," says Porter, who attended on scholarship. "But she was saying, 'Our town has all these beautiful flowers and plants in the medians of the highways,' and I was like, 'My road is gravel, and it was a big deal when the gravel wasn't dirt.' That was an upgrade."

Arriving in Washington gave her that same "poor church mouse" feeling, she says. "People ask, 'Do your kids go to public or private school?,' and I'm like, 'We make the exact same salary and I have three kids—just do the math," she says of the $174,000 salary that members of Congress earn. "You might as well ask me if I drive a Ferrari."

She calls it a well-meaning question, but says it comes from the assumption that members share a set of privileges. "There's a certain model of being a congressperson that I resist," Porter says. "There are people who think the bicoastal thing is cool—they have a penthouse here and a mansion there. And then there's my first apartment in DC: I had no closet, no cable, no Wi-Fi—just a mattress on the floor."

What it boils down to is this: "There is a class divide in Congress," Porter says. She gives an example of how she and three of her colleagues all own the same dress from Macy's. "They're Calvin Klein. They're like $99. That's what we have." When Speaker Nancy Pelosi made headlines in 2018 for a photo that showed her looking like a CONTINUED ON PAGE 230

"TIKTOK DO YOUR THING"

A *new generation* of everyday citizens–turned–*social media activists* are calling out racial injustice using the *tool they know best:* their cell phone.

By Carina Chocano

On May 25, 17-year-old Darnella Frazier was walking to the store with her 9-year-old cousin when she saw a man lying facedown on the sidewalk, a cop's knee on his neck. As most of the world now knows, for 10 excruciating minutes and nine seconds, she recorded the murder of George Floyd on her iPhone, posting the video to Facebook the next day. Later, she said she filmed the shockingly brutal incident—which was so universally repugnant it quickly sparked racial protests all over the world—because she didn't think anyone would believe her.

"How do we educate the populace about the problem of police violence, specifically against Black communities?" Tara Pixley, a visual journalist and assistant professor at Loyola Marymount University, says later when we speak by phone. "How do we convince them? They'll only believe it if they see it."

Frazier may be one of the most well-known recent examples of regular citizen–turned–cell-phone justice crusaders. But she was far from the first. Between 2009 and 2020, incidents of systemic racism and police brutality caught on camera mounted steadily. In 2009, Karina Vargas used her digital camera to record the killing of Oscar Grant, who was shot in the back by rapid transit police while restrained and lying facedown on the ground at Fruitvale Station in Oakland, California. Violent police behavior that led to the deaths of Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, Freddie Gray, and Alton Sterling was all caught on camera. Diamond Reynolds livestreamed the murder of her boyfriend, Philando Castile, from the passenger seat of his car. Sandra Bland filmed her own arrest in 2015. She was found dead, hanging in her jail cell, three days later. The video of her arrest was only recently released.

But now, in the wake of Floyd's death, racist abuse at the hands of everyone from cops to lady dog-walkers has been so assiduously documented and shared that its systemic nature, long denied, has become undeniable. In grocery stores, parks, high schools, bike paths—wherever racism rears its head, there is a cell phone camera on hand to capture the event and a social media army ready to mobilize.

In Maryland, a man on a bike stopped to rip the Black Lives Matter flyers out of a little girl's hands. In Arizona, a woman at a gas station convenience store yelled "You're going back to Mexico" at a Latina woman and got slapped. In Georgia, two students were expelled from high school after posting a racist video on TikTok. A 46-year-old white woman in California pepper-sprayed a group of teenage protesters. One of them filmed the incident, got a shot of her license plate, and posted it with the directive, "TikTok do your thing." (The woman was later arrested.)

"All the videos of Karens and the whole meme-ifying of this situation is just a way for Black and brown people in this country to deal with this truly tragic daily experience of implicit and explicit racism," Pixley says. "Turning tragedy into humor is a survival tactic, and it's something that Black Americans have had to do for centuries." On social media, she says, Black and brown communities feel empowered to speak out against racism and educate people in a way that is, for some, more palatable. "People will accept the truth if it's delivered in a humorous way, far more than they'll accept it if it makes them feel bad."

Six years ago, it was not a given that such things would go viral or result in justice. In 2014, for instance, Kianga Mwamba was in her car on her way to pick up food when she witnessed a violent arrest on the side of the street. "I saw a guy on the ground," says Mwamba, whose father was a Maryland Capitol police officer. "They were kicking and stomping him, and he was in handcuffs, so I started recording," she says. When officers saw her filming, they told Mwamba to pull over, but she couldn't because there were cars to the right of her. "The officer jumped on my car and started pulling me out. Then they Tased me and I was arrested."

When Mwamba asked why she was being arrested, an officer called her a "dumb bitch" and accused her of trying to hit one of his fellow agents with her car. She was charged with trying to run over an officer with a vehicle and spent the night in jail. When her phone was returned to her, she saw that the video had been deleted. Had it not been automatically backed up to Google, she would have had no way to prove that the report was false. When Mwamba produced the video of her arrest, the charges against her were dropped. "It was evident that I did not hit anybody, because my car never moved," she says. She filed a lawsuit against the Baltimore police, and eventually reached a settlement.

In recent months, the change in public awareness of police violence against Black and brown people—and the everyday racism that enables it—has been dramatic. Social media has galvanized its audience, finally cracking through the wall of denial that kept these incidents at least partly obscured. On May 29, three days after Frazier posted her video,

TIKTOK LOGO: KHABIB ALWI/ALAMY; GROUP OF DEMONSTRATORS: SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES; DEMONSTRATOR IN BLACK T-SHIRT: STEPHEN MATUREN/GETTY IMAGES.

PALIKA MAKAM, THE U.S. SENIOR PROGRAM COORDINATOR FOR WITNESS, A GLOBAL ORGANIZATION THAT HELPS PEOPLE USE VIDEO TO DOCUMENT HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES.

> "There's an old saying: A picture is worth a thousand words," says attorney T. Greg Doucette. "What I tell people is that a *video is worth a thousand pictures*."

a 39-year-old criminal defense and First Amendment attorney in Durham, North Carolina, named T. Greg Doucette started compiling videos of police brutality in a Twitter thread. Doucette, who describes himself as conservative but not Republican (not anymore), has been sharing videos of police brutality on social media since 2007, but says he was frustrated at how the furor would die down between incidents: "When you're just doing it once every couple of days, no one really sees that it's a systemic problem. They say, 'That's just one bad apple.'"

So when the Floyd protests began, Doucette decided to wait until he had 10 videos before posting them. It only took two days. "I posted those 10 from cities all over the country," he says. "Then other people started sending me stuff, so I started adding those in as well, and it ended up snowballing into a hot mess." As of this writing, Doucette's thread contained at least 775 videos documenting police violence at protests around the country since May 29.

"I think this is probably the most documented uprising that we've ever seen," says Palika Makam, a 31-year-old media activist based in Brooklyn. Makam is the U.S. Senior Program Coordinator for Witness, a global organization that helps people use video to document human rights abuses. "Uprisings started really being documented around the Arab Spring, back in 2011 or 2012, and then obviously in Ferguson, Missouri. But the magnitude of what is happening right now [with people of all races] taking to the streets and using their cell phones in real time to hold officers accountable—we haven't seen it on this scale before."

Makam was born and raised in a South Asian immigrant community in Chicago. "That definitely informed my ideas of my place in the world as a brown woman living in America," she says. She started out wanting to be a reporter, and founded a nonprofit in her early twenties that trained youth activists around the world in how to use video in their campaigns. "I worked in South Africa and Palestine," she says. "Then around 2014, when [Michael] Brown Jr. and Eric Garner were killed, I felt compelled to bring my work back home."

After she returned to the U.S., Makam's goal shifted to documenting abuses—and educating others on the most effective and safest ways to use social media to promote change. "People are inclined to whip out their phones when they see injustice," she says. But these efforts often don't lead to accountability, and can sometimes backfire, causing people to be targeted. In a recent post, Makam shared tips for filming police misconduct, from safety measures like obscuring identities and posting anonymously to knowing your rights, protecting your phone, automatically uploading footage to the cloud, and telling a story with your footage. "The first question to consider is: Am I putting myself in danger by posting this online?" she says. She also encourages people to think through issues of consent and traumatization. "Darnella Frazier hasn't been retaliated against by police, but she's been dealing with unwanted media attention and trolls. That's a lot for anyone, especially a young Black woman who witnessed a traumatic event, to endure."

It helps to have some sort of strategy for how you're going to film your video and release it. When Walter Scott was killed by a North Charleston, South Carolina, police officer, a witness named Feiden Santana caught the entire thing on camera. "He was scared," Makam says. "He wasn't sure what to do." Instead of posting the footage immediately, Santana reached out to an acquaintance online, who ultimately helped him get in touch with the lawyer representing Walter Scott's family. The attorney then provided the tape to the *New York Times*. They published the video after the police report came out, which said that the officer killed Walter Scott out of self-defense when Scott tried to grab his Taser. "But the footage revealed that Walter Scott was running away from the officer when the officer shot him in the back eight times—and then took his Taser and planted it next to his dead body on the ground," Makam says. When the video was released, the officer, Michael Slager, was arrested and charged with second-degree murder. The murder charge was dropped after Slager pleaded guilty to a federal charge of depriving Scott of his civil rights under color of law; he was later sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Doucette credits the torrent of video evidence of outrageous police conduct for the political momentum for reform we saw in June. "There's an old saying: A picture is worth a thousand words," he says. "What I tell people is that a video is worth a thousand pictures." And he's optimistic that those who used to be on the fence have had their eyes opened. "I hate to be ageist about it," Doucette says, "but we're seeing changes based on generation. The youngest folks, the ones on TikTok and Instagram and Snapchat, are getting this experience for the first time in their lives, and it's going to encourage them to keep going to these protests and to stream them. Folks in their thirties to fifties are lobbying for actual police reform, contacting their elected officials. And as for the older folks? They're the ones who vote the most, who give the most money to politicians and have the most influence. You're going to see them really focus on changing who the elected officials are, getting reforms through legislation." Still, he concludes, it's a comprehensive effort that doesn't end with documenting abuses. Rather, it starts there. "For better or worse, folks in the 18-to-24 age range don't vote that often. But they're the ones in the street, protesting and providing the raw information to the rest of us," he says. "It's on the rest of us to try to make sure that something good comes out of it." ■

MAKAM: COURTESY OF THE SUBJECT.

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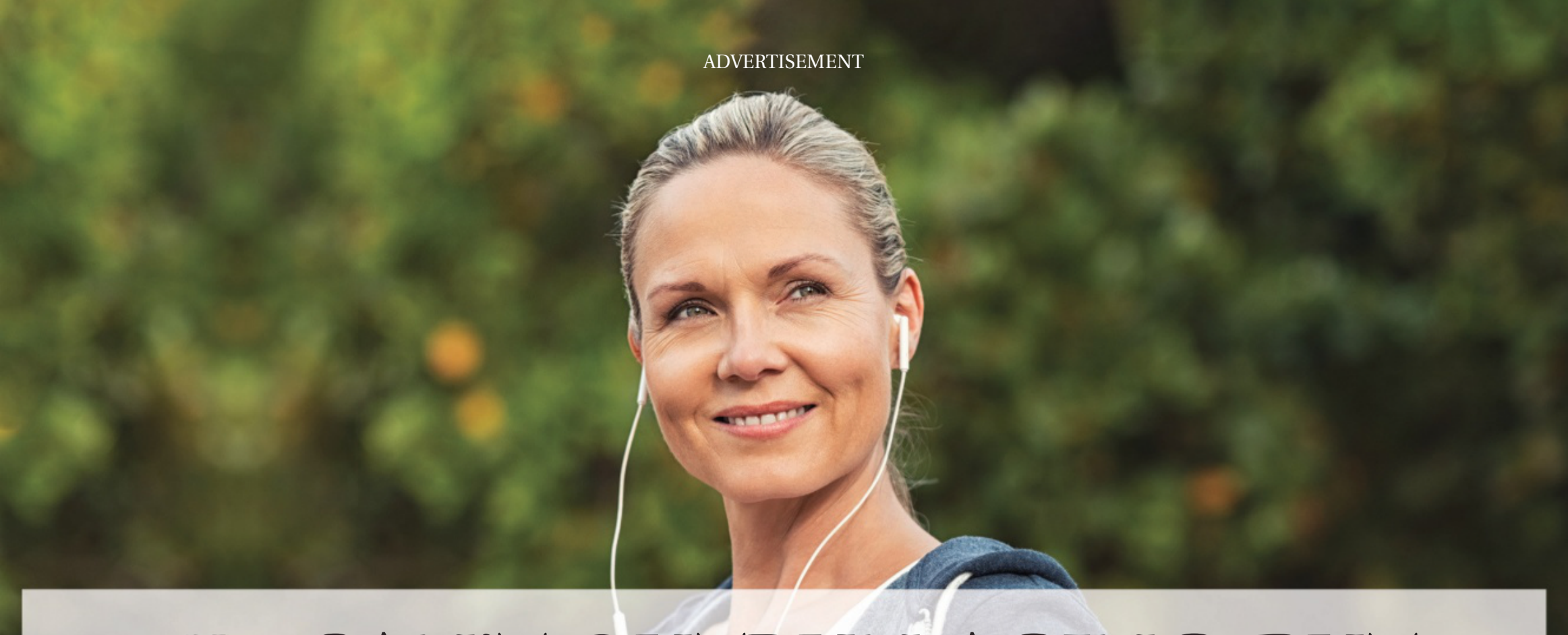


WE CAN'T OUTRUN AGING, BUT WE CAN LOOK GOOD TRYING

How I started a new journey to youthful looking skin

I never thought much about getting older, because I never felt old. When I picture old age, I see a white-haired lady hunched over in her easy chair with barely enough energy to pour herself a glass of milk. And that's never been me.

I'm a runner. I run 2K's, 5K's, marathons and everything in between (including Turkey Trots and fun-runs). I was never too competitive, but I could outrun just about anybody I met. My favorite kind of run? The long quiet miles on crisp fall mornings as I race the sun to the horizon.

Recently though, it became painfully apparent that I haven't been outrunning my age. It all started with the last race I completed. My husband snapped a picture of me as I breathlessly crossed the finish line. He posted the photo with pride, but when I saw it later, I was dumbstruck. When had those lines on my face multiplied? Had the skin on my neck and cheeks always sagged like that? Could that old woman really be me?

I'm ashamed to say I asked my husband to remove the photo from his page.

For a while, every time I looked in the mirror, I grimaced. Insecurities started to eat away at my quiet moments, and even the pounding of my heels on the pavement couldn't help. I was losing the sense of my youth, my power, my me-ness. I even stopped running...

"Am I becoming an old woman?"

It's the question that came spilling out over a glass of pinot with my friend and former model, Nancy. Only a year older than me, Nancy's face hasn't changed much since college. It never bothered me before, but that night, after everything I'd been thinking about, I couldn't take it.

"Am I becoming an old woman?" I asked. Nancy burst out laughing. Ever the straight shooter, Nancy pointed out that yes, I was getting older and so was she, but apparently that's not what mattered. How we aged was what mattered. Then she told me that there were plenty of things I could do to look younger. She talked about staying hydrated, eating well and wearing sunscreen. Then she mentioned her anti-aging secret weapon—a collagen peptide-boosting supplement by a company called Native Origins.

She talked on and on about how it worked, and I listened. Intently. Collagen are these "ropes of protein" that keep skin plump and tight, she said. When we're young, these ropes are firm. But as we age, the body produces less collagen. In fact, according to Nancy's quick Google search, we start losing 1.5% of our collagen supply every year starting in our twenties. I did the math. At this rate I'll have lost nearly 40% of my natural collagens level by my next birthday.

Finding the answers to anti-aging

I quickly became hooked on the science of anti-aging. What can I say? Runners tend to be a bit obsessive.

Here's the skinny: Collagen peptides (smaller chains of collagen) can be absorbed through digestion. Vitamin C then acts as an adhesive, binding together various cells with collagen peptides to create collagen in the body.

With that in mind, I Googled collagen peptide products with Vitamin C and great reviews. All my research led me to the same product company Nancy had mentioned that day—Native Origins Collagen Peptides.

Taking back youth with Native Origins Collagen Peptides Supplement Formula

Marathon training has taught me the importance of watching what you put in your body. Which is why Native Origins turned out to be the perfect solution for my aging dilemma.

Native Origins' formula counteracts collagen loss using the highest quality natural ingredients. That includes hydrolyzed collagen types I, II and III, which are vital to skin health. They use micro-encapsulated Vitamin C to help your body fully absorb the formula's benefits. As an added bonus, each product is tested and produced in an FDA-registered production facility. It's cultivated from grass-fed, pasture-raised cows. Antibiotic and hormone-free. Non-GMO. It was checking off all the right boxes.

When I placed my order, there was an immediate release of tension and grief from the last few weeks. I felt like I had started a journey back to vitality, confidence and, most importantly, my sense of self. So, feeling invigorated, I signed up for another marathon in 3 months and ran for the first time in weeks.

Every morning, I added one scoop of Native Origins Collagen Peptides Supplement Formula into my protein shake and drank it down. I also started hydrating more often, wearing more sunscreen and incorporating anti-aging foods into my diet, like blueberries, avocados and oranges. I was taking care of my body, mind and heart in a new and fulfilling way.

I'd pester my husband daily. Did he notice anything different? How about today? What about now? I was so excited, almost giddy—I certainly felt younger, but did I look younger?

The marathon afterglow... with a little extra "glow"

4 weeks after my first Native Origins package arrived, I crossed the finish line with a new personal best. As I whooped with joy and triumph, my grinning husband snapped a zillion pictures from his phone. When he showed me the images later that night, I had a new dilemma—I couldn't choose which photo of this glowing, youthful and vibrant woman to post!

I managed to speak to a Native Origins representative and negotiate an exclusive offer. If you order this month, you'll receive $10 off your first order by using promo code "**ELL10**" at checkout. You can try it yourself and order Native Origins Collagen Peptides at Native Origins.com.

RETHINKING WELL-READ

At a time when *Black women writers* top the best-seller lists, *Roxane Fequiere* asks why it took so long for America to *value their brilliance*.

When looking back on this summer of protest and racial reckoning, the question I'll always struggle with is one dripping with skepticism that's hard-earned, if not entirely productive. What made this uprising different for so many white people who sat up, took notice, donated money, shared resources, took to the streets, called out and in, and self-reflected, seemingly for the first time?

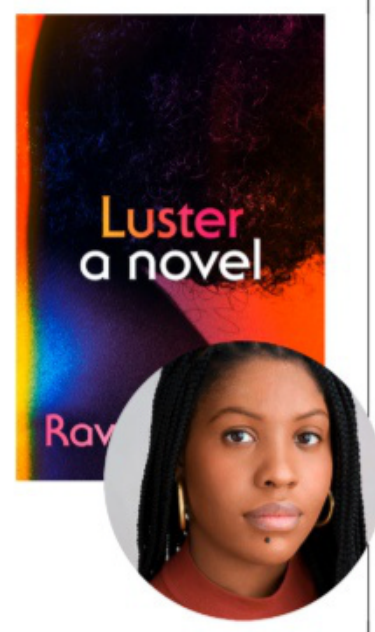
The question nags at me, but even as I realize that there are responses that could possibly edify me, none could ever satisfy. Better to steep in the bittersweet reality in which we find ourselves. Progress is progress, after all—the journey of a thousand miles and all that. Certainly for the first time in my life, larger-than-usual swaths of white people appear to be seeing their schools, neighborhoods, police forces, industries, and even bookshelves with fresh eyes.

Just as they'd begun, in essence, cramming for a course more than halfway through the semester, snatching up Ibram X. Kendi's *How to Be an Antiracist* and Ijeoma Oluo's *So You Want to Talk About Race* faster than booksellers could restock them, the inequities of publishing itself were laid bare. #PublishingPaidMe, started by Black authors L. L. McKinney and Tochi Onyebuchi, revealed how vast the industry's pay gap is. If advances are seen as investments in an author's talent, then it's clear that publishers don't often bet big on Black writers.

For white book lovers who've found these figures disheartening or illogical, given the accolades many of their favorite Black authors rake in, have they considered what becomes of Black stories that don't make the must-read lists, what happens to Black stories that languish in drafts, the barriers of the world of publishing too great?

We've all been genuinely lucky to bask in the greatness of Black brilliance when so many of our institutions have been designed to snuff it out, or at least silence it. We're fortunate that it emerges, in spite of the obstacles designed to slow its ascent. And yet the skepticism remains as I look at my white counterparts scrambling to quickly read up on what they've missed, my frustration boiling over as a Black woman who learned from a lifetime's worth of class curricula that to be "well-read" meant to immerse myself in white authorship.

BRIT BENNETT'S *THE VANISHING HALF* (RIVERHEAD), HER MUCH-AWAITED FOLLOW-UP TO 2016'S *THE MOTHERS*, HAS BEEN OPTIONED BY HBO.



LUSTER (FARRAR, STRAUS AND GIROUX), ARTIST AND WRITER RAVEN LEILANI'S DEBUT, HAS BEEN CELEBRATED BY ZADIE SMITH.

TRANSCENDENT KINGDOM (KNOPF) IS YAA GYASI'S SECOND NOVEL; 2016'S *HOMEGOING* WON THE PEN/HEMINGWAY AWARD.

As I revel in the success of recent and upcoming releases by Black writers, I catch myself wondering if this groundswell will translate into sustained support for our storytellers, past and present. I long to see the works of Ann Petry, Dorothy West, and June Jordan given their due, as we make sure that the names of Brit Bennett, Yaa Gyasi, Raven Leilani, and so many others remain etched in our nation's literary firmament.

It's difficult to consider Bennett's *The Vanishing Half*, which topped the *New York Times* Best Seller list in June, without thinking about Nella Larsen's *Passing*, published in 1929. Bennett provides an unflinching look at how futile proximity to whiteness is for the Vignes sisters, Desiree and Stella, Black twins in a town founded for those "who would never be accepted as white but refused to be treated like Negroes." The residents are exclusively light-skinned and almost unanimously color-struck, but their lives resemble those in other Southern Black towns in the 1950s too closely to conclude that pale skin confers a real benefit upon their Blackness.

As girls, the twins watch in mute terror as their father is lynched by an angry mob. Years later, they must drop out of high school and clean white people's homes to make ends meet. Running away from home, one sister resolves to fully cross over into the white world to evade a second-class fate. Bennett tells both sisters' stories, as well as those of their daughters, over the course of decades. In many ways, her second novel builds on the legacy of *Passing*. To read Stella's story without understanding Larsen's Clare Kendry gives a blinkered outlook on the history of racial passing in American fiction.

In Edie, the protagonist in Leilani's *Luster*, I found the antidote to the myriad reckless, nihilistic white female characters that have been trotted out decade after decade and somehow lauded as revolutionary every time. Angry, darkly funny, wounded, and all too sure of exactly how she is seen by her peers, Edie begins as a sort of spiritual successor to Petry's Lutie Johnson at the end of her 1946 novel, *The Street*—a Black woman who has seen too clearly the obstacles boxing her in and has decided to stop trying to climb over them.

Gyasi's *Transcendent Kingdom* is an expertly calibrated narrative about grief, depression, addiction, science, faith, and the immigrant experience. The story is told through the eyes of a young woman prone to emotional distance in her attempts to care for her suicidal mother—even as she excels in her neuroscience doctorate program, where she researches the neural pathways that led to her own brother's OxyContin overdose. Issues of race are of course at play in *Transcendent Kingdom*, as in any story about growing up Black in America, but here, it's just one constant, crackling noise amid the cacophony of a life.

It's downright thrilling to think about the molds Gyasi's already broken and the storytellers she'll inspire in her wake. Still, it's daunting, and frankly tragic, to consider the voices lost to time, excluded from the canon, or published without the appropriate hype needed to reach a broad audience. Diversifying our collective bookshelf can't be a onetime event—we'll need to cherish today's bright young talent while simultaneously excavating the work of several past generations. Without this crucial context, we'll only ever be partially well-read. ■

LEILANI: NINA SUBIN; REMAINING IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE SUBJECTS.

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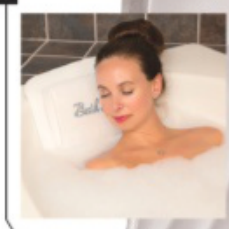

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ANN CURRY STILL DOESN'T KNOW WHY SHE WAS OUSTED

"The bottom line is that it still hurts."

By Carrie Battan

DURING ONE OF THE BIGGEST NEWS EVENTS in history, one of America's most prominent television journalists is not in the newsroom. Instead, Ann Curry, the former cohost of the *Today* show, is spending the COVID-19 shutdown in her Connecticut home, where she's been in quarantine with her husband, tweeting.

Curry has always been more of a hard-news reporter than a TV personality, and she's used her days at home trying to pinpoint the most verifiable information about the pandemic to disseminate to her 1.5 million followers. It's not exactly the gilded celebrity pedestal she once occupied, but like everything Curry does, it's earnest, honest work. "It's not as if I want to be on TV talking about this stuff," Curry assures me. "But I would love to be involved in making sure the right questions are asked. What is it that we have to do to survive this together? It's better than overeating out of worry."

On March 17, the week most of the United States grinds to an ominous, screeching halt, Curry finds reason to laugh amid all the bleakness on her timeline. "I've had much time to reflect during this COVID-19 crisis & I keep coming back to one thing," a user named Adam Peters posts on Twitter. "@AnnCurry was royally screwed & deserves the most epic comeback of all time. I'd run into fire for her, drive her around as she eggs NBC execs, or work for her presidential campaign." Curry retweets the message with a grateful note: "Ok. I will admit you made me laugh, which is esp. appreciated today. Good morning, good morning, good morning Adam."

In her time at NBC, Curry became an icon for viewers like Peters, who valued the air of old-school journalistic nobility she lent *Today*. So much so that even in a pandemic, her fans are still ruminating on her untimely departure. And yet, when receiving a compliment, Curry finds a way to temper her reaction with a self-deprecating aside, lest she be perceived as bitter or gossipy. "Good morning, good morning, good morning" is a reference to one of her on-screen gaffes, which became a fixation for *Today* critics. (Depleted from a tough reporting assignment overseas, Curry once spaced out during a broadcast, greeting the audience three times instead of just once.)

A newshound at heart, Curry—who has won seven Emmys—is obsessed with the truth. She has "always been a journalist who has wanted information to give people power, and this moment is really all about good, bankable information," she says of the COVID-19 crisis. The irony is that she can't seem to pinpoint good, bankable information that might explain what happened to her at *Today*, NBC News's crown jewel and morning-news ratings juggernaut, where she occupied the cohost spot alongside Matt Lauer for one brief, awkward year. "I still don't really understand," she says. "I know I did nothing wrong. I know I was good at my job.

"They say where there's smoke, there's fire," she continues. "You can read the tea leaves. But you know, I'm a fact-based reporter, so it's hard for me to go out there, with something so close to the vest. I don't know. I don't know." Her voice grows louder, more exasperated. She believes she can help bring truth to power when it comes to a global pandemic, but not her own professional history. "I don't know!" she says about her removal, before turning the question back outward: "*Why?*"

Two weeks prior, before the pandemic has confined many of us to our homes, Curry and I meet up for a walk in midtown Manhattan, not far from where the news anchor lives most of the time. Cases of the virus had only just been reported in the United States, and we're blissfully unaware that this will be one of our final opportunities to roam New York City worry-free. The sprightly news anchor grabs my arm and hurries me toward downtown. As we walk, Curry attracts plenty of attention. Not because she's one of the most well-known television journalists of the modern era. People are looking at her because of her coat, a Barbie-pink tailored wool jacket that pops out even in the city's most chaotic sidewalks.

One onlooker asks Curry where she bought it. "Online!" the youthful 62-year-old yells from behind her oversize Gucci sunglasses, smiling and zooming past her admirer. For nearly four straight miles, a seemingly casual jaunt for the indefatigable journalist, Curry only slows down to drop twenties into the hands of the homeless people she passes. Once we arrive at the downtown restaurant where we'll be having lunch (me, winded; her, energized), the compliments keep coming. "I love your jacket, by the way," our waitress tells her as she drops menus onto the

table. "And I love your smock!" Curry replies cheerfully. "It almost feels like a French workman's coat." The waitress smiles. "You get one free if you work here," she says. Curry notes that she could apply for a job to get the garb.

This is a joke, of course, but it hints at an uncomfortable truth: Curry has sort of been without a job, or at least an appropriately prominent one, for the last eight years. Her role on *Today* was a dream position that marked the pinnacle of her 30 years in television journalism, the culmination of all the hard work she'd put in as an anchor on *Dateline* and as a reporter at NBC News. And yet the superlative gig was doomed from the start. Almost immediately, speculation swirled about *Today*'s tepid ratings; the narrative was that Curry and Lauer just didn't have the onscreen chemistry needed to sustain the show's dominance, and Lauer was *Today*'s prize pony. Within a few months, rumors leaked that Curry would be on her way out. And then, suddenly, she was.

On June 28, 2012, she made her final appearance beside Lauer, telling the audience through tears: "This is not as I expected, to ever leave this couch, after 15 years [at NBC]. But I am so grateful, especially to all of you who watch." At the end of the farewell, Lauer leaned over to kiss Curry on the side of the head, and she flinched, shrinking away from her colleague's embrace—a fitting goodbye to a relationship that had long felt unnatural.

It would take another half decade for viewers to comprehend the complexity of her goodbye. In 2017, Lauer was fired after a female colleague accused him of inappropriate sexual behavior. Days later, the *New York Times* reported two other women had come forward with similar complaints, and *Variety* reported additional accusations. These allegations did not fall into the gray zone many #MeToo cases did, but rather painted a portrait of a long and disturbing pattern of sexually manipulative behavior in the workplace. Women accused Lauer of lording his power over them, of once exposing his penis without warning, of making frequent lewd comments, and of gifting an unwanted sex toy. (In late November of 2017, Lauer issued a statement saying that he was "truly sorry" and that not all the allegations were correct, but that "there is enough truth in these stories to make me feel embarrassed and ashamed." However, in 2018 he wrote to the *Washington Post* after these allegations were brought up again. "I fully acknowledge that I acted inappropriately as a husband, father and principal at NBC. However I want to make it perfectly clear that any allegations or reports of coercive, aggressive or abusive actions on my part, at any time, are absolutely false.") Later, Ronan Farrow's book *Catch and Kill* revealed more about the incident Lauer was fired for: a younger colleague alleged that he raped her in a hotel room during the 2014 Sochi Olympics. (Lauer has continually disputed these claims, writing in a May 2020 op-ed for Mediaite that he was "falsely accused of rape," and that he had a "consensual, yet inappropriate, relationship with a fellow employee in the workplace.")

> "[I've had to be] like water between rocks," Curry says. "To figure out the path that might help some and not hurt others."

Curry was revealed as one of the few powerful NBC employees who weren't trying to protect Lauer. In 2018, she told the *Washington Post* that one of Lauer's accusers had confided in her about her cohost's behavior in 2012: "I told management they had a problem and they needed to keep an eye on him and how he deals with women." Curry was in a personal and journalistic bind. She wanted to honor the wishes and confidentiality of her source, but also wanted to flag a blatant abuse of power. She protected the identity of her colleague when she went to NBC executives to issue a warning about Lauer—only to be pushed out of her role. Lauer, in his Mediaite op-ed, issues skepticism about the vagueness of Curry's description of her conversation with NBC executives—vagueness that stemmed from her desire to protect the accuser's identity. Since her departure from the network, more female NBC employees have confided in her about Lauer, Curry says.

It would be easy for Curry to give explosive interviews about her former workplace. But doing so would undermine the journalistic ethos she's cultivated since her early days as a local news reporter in Oregon in the 1970s, where she was the first female reporter at KTVL. ("I was told that women have no news judgment and can't carry a camera," she remembers. "It was at that moment that I felt very alone and vulnerable. I thought, 'I could fail, or I could think about all the women who are still to come.'") Over time, Curry developed an armor of dignity by avoiding gossip, seeking out stories that felt bigger than herself, and protecting her sources at all costs.

"In so many ways, [I've had to be] like water between rocks," she tells me over lunch. "To figure out the path that might help some and not hurt others." In 2018, she gently nodded in agreement when the hosts of *CBS This Morning* asked if NBC did indeed have a "climate of verbal sexual harassment," but she hasn't elaborated further. "I have no interest in hurting people; my only interest is in figuring out if I can help," she says. "I was in a position where, as a reporter, I was unable to talk about it. I was asked, 'Please keep this to yourself.' I kept that confidence, as I should have. That was tough."

When I ask Curry about her relationship with her former colleagues, her tone is respectfully chilly. "I still have some friends," she says. If she is not exactly best pals with the top brass, Curry remains a confidante for many of the women who are still there, trying to sort out their experiences. "There has been more than one [woman] who's come to me now [about Lauer]," she says. "I hope they've come to me because they know that I'll be empathetic and compassionate. I'm a right-and-a-wrong girl.

"And I'm happy to be their friend," she adds. "This is a deep level of suffering, from what I've learned. They're dealing with trauma that threatens to be lifelong."

Curry would like to move on from the single most painful experience of her career. And yet there are reminders everywhere. I ask Curry if she's watched *The Morning Show*, the drama inspired by the culture at *Today*, starring Jennifer Aniston, Reese Witherspoon, and Steve Carell. "I hear it's good. A number of my friends saw it, and they liked it," she says. She didn't watch it, though: "I thought it might make me feel bad."

When I ask Curry how, in hindsight, she feels about her time at *Today*, we're both instantly transported back to her uncomfortable final taping. "I think I'm...um...," she stammers, chewing painstakingly on her salade Niçoise. "I feel like I've done everything I should have done." She begins to choke up a bit before correcting course. "I'm perhaps earnest to a fault," she says. "If I had to do it over again, and it meant going through it all over again, to accomplish the kind of reporting I'm really proud of, I would." What Curry regrets most is no longer being able to do the in-depth reporting on humanitarian disasters that she lived to cover. "The sadness is, those stories, [after I left], stopped being done," she says. Globally minded geopolitical stories are widely considered to be ratings killers. "There is a higher calling than selling newspapers or TV time," Curry says. "The internet has threatened the amount of money that major media organizations can make. But if you're in a service industry, maybe you shouldn't be making so much money. Maybe [journalism] shouldn't be a fundraising opportunity for megamillionaires."

After she was removed as cohost, Curry was given the unofficial title of anchor-at-large at *Today*, and the title of international and national correspondent for NBC News. She was able to handpick a team of producers and researchers to work on news reports. Still, this didn't give her the kind of platform she might have expected. In 2015, she severed her partnership with NBC CONTINUED ON PAGE 230

CURRY: VICTORIA WILL.

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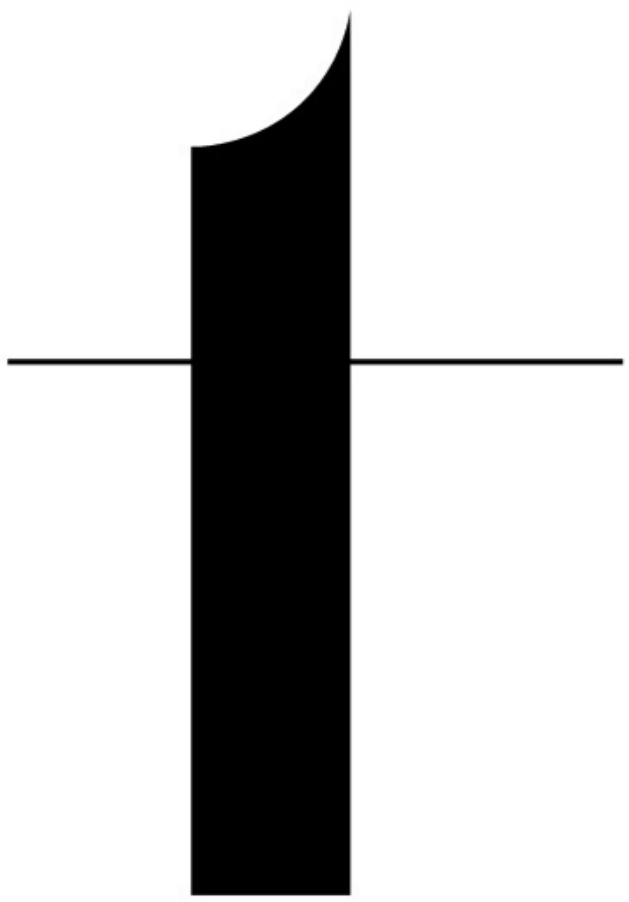
THE POLITICS OF BEING CARDI B

She isn't perfect, nor does she claim to be, but *the loquacious rapper* is learning, growing, and proving *with her sophomore album* that she and *her powerful voice* are here *to stay.*

BY MARJON CARLOS.
PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEVEN KLEIN.
FASHION DIRECTION BY ALEX WHITE.
STYLED BY KOLLIN CARTER.

Top, Balenciaga, $3,690. Swarovski crystal veil, Keren Wolf, $225.



feels like a lifetime ago, given the breakneck pace of the news and the steady erosion of our political system, but it has only been a year since rap lightning rod Cardi B sat down with Democratic presidential hopeful Senator Bernie Sanders in a Detroit nail salon in the summer of 2019. The polymathic force—former stripper/onetime reality star/raptress/wife/mother/hellion—converted the salon into a backdrop for an earnest conversation around the most urgent issues facing Americans today: job creation, police brutality, a livable minimum wage, and workers' rights. The scene was full of obvious asymmetry—Cardi's glamour-puss persona played irreverently off Sanders's mensch—but in many ways, it was just two New Yorkers talking about the issues of the day, with the all the camaraderie of the politicking found at any Dominican bodega that dots Cardi's native South Bronx neighborhood.

This wasn't the first time that Cardi, born Belcalis Marlenis Almánzar, had spoken out about politics; in fact, the voluble rapper, who experienced meteoric fame after the release of 2017's chart-topping "Bodak Yellow," can't keep herself from doing so. Whether imploring fellow celebrities and influencers in unprompted Instagram videos to use their platforms to speak out against President Donald Trump's draconian rule, or expressing her infatuation with the New Deal in a 2018 *GQ* interview, Cardi never minces words. She is a lifelong history buff—a gangsta with a thing for Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Still, her decision to sit down with the senator immediately courted controversy, turning the comments section of her Instagram into a battleground of dissent. Nearly every time she speaks on such topics, a rush of online naysayers balk at the self-described "regular degular schmegular girl from the Bronx" making a foray into politics: "You need to stick to rapping, sis, you obviously don't know what you're talking about," one commenter wrote. Fox News panned Cardi's and Sanders's meeting of the minds, slut-shaming her for her former work as a stripper while ignoring the fact that the current resident of the White House was once embroiled in an alleged affair with a porn star. But as Cardi declared in the 2019 song "Clout," "Public opinions from private accounts / You not a check, then you gotta bounce," referring to the verified check marks on social media platforms. Which is to say, Cardi will not be quieted by bots, avatars, critics, or trolls.

Nearly a year later, in early July, I'm on the phone with the rapper, who is in L.A. prepping the first video of her long-awaited sophomore album. The topics covered in her prescient heart-to-heart with Sanders are now playing out in real time. COVID-19 has sent the U.S. economy into a recession and triggered mass unemployment ("A lot of my family caught COVID. A lot of people around me lost their jobs," Cardi says). The Republican-controlled Senate's response has left millions of Americans struggling to make ends meet with a mere onetime $1,200 stimulus check. All while unarmed Black men and women are being killed by the police in the streets and in their homes with impunity. Oh, and the presidential election has been whittled down to just two candidates, with "Uncle Bernie," Cardi's nickname for Sanders, having conceded to former vice president Joe Biden in April.

Of course, the rapper never could have foreseen a global pandemic, nor its fallout, but she recognized early on the value in remaining politically engaged and the significance of the upcoming presidential election. While she may be disappointed that Sanders has dropped out of the race, she assures me she is committed to doing anything to get Joe Biden elected (including talking to him for ELLE; see page 172). She wants Trump out of office, describing him as an ineffectual leader. "Those people that he caters [to], he's not going to do anything for them. It's not like Republicans are getting better housing. It's not like Republicans are getting better benefits. They're not. He's not doing anything for anybody. He's just saying things that appease the same people." Cardi has a different vision. "I want a president who makes me feel secure. I want a president who understands the pain of the people. I want a president who is going to give us answers," she says, wistfully. "That's why I like [New York governor Andrew] Cuomo. I like him because he makes me feel like he's listening to me." She's been rallying her loyal Bardi Gang fan base to become more active in their electoral system, voting in elections at all levels: "You can vote for DAs. You can vote for mayors. You can vote for your district. Not everything is the president. You know what I'm saying?"

Cardi's message is piercing, and unlike many of her celebrity peers, she seems to be able to get through to her millions-strong online community, using diaristic Instagram Lives as a brand of rogue daily press briefings. On a recent standout episode, she launched into a seething, unedited soliloquy on how carelessly she saw the public responding to COVID, all while balancing a towel on her head, a robe around her waist, and clicking and clacking her trademark talons for added effect. "Y'all not taking it motherfuckin' serious!" Pounding her fist against a takeout container, she was both the picture of a wisecracking, concerned mother and a New Age political savant.

In recent weeks, Cardi has put out forceful statements on current events that bear no resemblance to canned press releases or performative activism. After participating in a call that gun control advocate Tamika Mallory arranged with Breonna Taylor's mom, Tamika Palmer, and other celebrities, Cardi became wholly invested in the wrongful death of the 26-year-old Black EMT, who was fatally shot eight times in her home by plainclothes police officers in Louisville, Kentucky. The

Hood, $2,290, top, $9,200, Paco Rabanne.

BEAUTY TIP
Play the long game with extra lashes. Try D'Lashes 3D Soft D'Wispy Lashes ($30).

officers justified entering with a so-called no-knock warrant. "That is so insane to me. [I saw] Breonna Taylor's name everywhere, but I didn't really know her story," Cardi says. "What they did to her is really fucked up. Really fucked up." She is enraged about the lack of justice: "What's the excuse? Why is the cop not in jail? Wasn't what he did a crime? It's a crime! And no apology. No apology. No video of the cop coming out crying, 'I fucked up. I don't this. I don't that.' Nothing. It's nothing. I don't even know how her mom still holds her head up. Unbelievable."

Cardi became incensed upon hearing Palmer, who filed a lawsuit against the officers involved in May, recount the painful and confusing treatment she received from the police department in the hours after her daughter's murder. Officers sent Palmer to the hospital despite knowing Breonna's body remained in her home; she told Cardi and the other celebs on the call that the police gave her the runaround for hours when she asked questions about Breonna's fate. "Imagine how frustrated her mom was, crying, probably hysterical. The cops call her saying her daughter is in the hospital, and her daughter is not even there. Then the person who's supposed to protect her is asking her mom, 'Do you know anybody who [would] want to hurt Breonna Taylor?' when you guys know who killed her!"

"I saw I was *trending on Twitter* and…I'm like, 'Jesus Christ, *what did I do now*?'"

The harrowing account reminded Cardi of when her own cousin was murdered: "I remember everybody waking up at 3 a.m. and driving all the way to New Jersey, to the hospital. And through all that driving, you're crying and scared and everything." The experience inspired her to join a growing cadre of notable women (Beyoncé, Oprah, Senator Kamala Harris) who have pleaded for charges to be brought against the offending officers involved in Taylor's murder: Jon Mattingly, Brett Hankison, and Myles Cosgrove. "*Don't let Kentucky Police Department get away with this shit!!!!!*" Cardi wrote in a paragraph-long Instagram caption detailing Taylor's case that she posted in early June. Cardi would go on to change her IG avatar to simply "Breonna Taylor" to pay homage and bring continued awareness to the issue.

She says she wishes she saw more male rappers speaking out about Taylor's killing. "A woman like Breonna Taylor, she was young. She looked like she was listening to your music. She looked like she was your fan. You should stick up for her," she says. While some would hesitate to call Cardi a "conscious rapper," her words speak to a larger conversation currently being waged within the rap community around the political responsibility of top-tier male hip-hop artists. Chance the Rapper and J.Cole, two rappers who are often lauded for their introspective body of work, noticeably waded into the debate around the state of America's political unrest this past summer, but both clumsily responded and were chastised publicly for their polarizing stances. Cardi's advocacy for progressive social policies like Social Security and other public safety nets often puts her in a league of her own.

Of course, Cardi's politics are not above reproach. The rapper has been "canceled" many times (there were at least four attempts in 2019 alone) for incendiary comments that were viewed as glorifying crime, and guilty of colorism and racism. The list of offenses is lengthy, and includes years-old footage of Cardi admitting to drugging and robbing men during her stripper days, as well as resurfaced tweets of Cardi using the word *cockroach* to allegedly describe dark-skinned Black women. More recently, Cardi was accused of keeping a ghost Instagram account in which she allegedly commented on other celebrities, including Megan Thee Stallion, Ariana Grande, and eternal foe Nicki Minaj. "I saw I was trending on Twitter, and I'm like, 'What the fuck?'" Cardi says of seeing the hashtag #CardiBIsOver. "I'm like, 'Jesus Christ, what did I do now? Like what?'" In response, she posted a video on Instagram, seemingly unfazed, showing off what she was wearing to her own "cancel party" (a white slipdress and matching Christian Louboutin heels) before jumping into a pool, fully clothed. "If I haven't been posting on Instagram and eating food and that still bothers y'all, that just means I'm really that important in your heart and my press is really part of your soul. And guess what? I don't give a damn. Bye!" she ranted in the footage.

Speaking with her now, the IDGAF facade seems to have worn thin. "I cannot believe 73 people are trying to cancel me over a lie. Can you imagine me having a fake Instagram account to talk shit about different artists that I don't even think about?" she says. "I'm 27 years old, you know what I'm saying? I'm 27 years old and I have big bills, big responsibilities, and a kid who's on my ass a lot." Besides, as Cardi explains, she has never been one to hide her feelings, so a ghost account feels antithetical to who she is. "If I don't fucking like somebody, I am going to let them know I don't fucking like them, or I don't fuck with them, or I'm not feeling their energy. I'm not going to make a fake Instagram trolling artists, talking shit about artists. Are you crazy?"

But even before the dust could settle on *that* turmoil, Cardi was trending again, weeks later, for using the term *chinky eyes* to describe her two-year-old daughter Kulture's eyes. The internet's response to her using the racial slur—an insult that originated in the late nineteenth century to describe the monolids of many Asian people—was swift, especially considering the rise of anti-Asian racism in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. The rapper quickly responded, explaining that she never knew the racist origins of the term. "Never in my life, my 27 years, I never even knew that was a racial slur," she tells me. "I was describing my husband's and my sister's eyes, and my daughter's eyes.... I don't even know how to describe their eyes anymore because that's how I used to describe their eyes. I don't even know the word. That they're almond shaped? But it's like, I never knew that. And for people to be like, 'She's using a racial slur. She's disgusting.' And it's like, 'Bro, I didn't even know that was a racial slur.... I didn't say it...with no bad ill intention.'"

After each failing, Cardi undergoes a very public unlearning process, which seems to be in line with her evolution from her impoverished background to international superstardom. Rewatching *Love & Hip Hop New York*, which she starred in from 2015 to 2016, it's clear her worldview has broadened in the years since. She has worked to shake off old habits and outdated ways of thinking. She acknowledges what she knows and what she doesn't. And laments the shortcomings of her upbringing, while never apologizing for where she came from. As she's said in the past, "I made the choices that I did at the time because I had very limited options. I was blessed to have been able to rise from that, but so many women have not. Whether or not they were poor choices at the time, I did what I had to do to survive."

But cancel culture doesn't often allow for such a learning curve. The public shaming of public figures over offensive behavior or remarks is often an attempt to right systemic issues in a single firing or career-ending takedown. Except that Cardi's "cancellations" have hardly been the end of her—it is her unedited style and delivery that have made her

HAIR BY TOKYO STYLEZ; MAKEUP BY ERIKA LA'PEARL; MANICURE BY JENNY BUI; SET DESIGN BY MARY HOWARD AND KYLE HAGEMEIER AT MHS ARTISTS; PRODUCED BY TRAVIS KIEWEL AND ROBERTO JAVIER SOSA FOR THAT ONE PRODUCTION.

famous, to begin with, and almost immune to such outcry. The public can certainly be mad or disappointed in the rapper, but she's a populist artist, a woman of the people. If anything, Cardi's foibles have made her more accessible—someone flawed who is looking to address and repair her blind spots.

Still, she remains genuinely perplexed by her constant cancellations. "It's like I have a target on my back, but it's not because of my music. Because I haven't done music for eight months, and people still try to attack me," she says. "I feel like people are attacking me because they want me to feel the pressure of bullying, and they want me to give up, and they want me to say, 'Oh, I quit music' or 'I'll delete my Instagram, delete my Twitter,' and I'm not willing to do that. No one will ever have that much power [over] me."

One has to wonder, given her recent musings, if her new album will be her *Lemonade*—a pointedly political body of work that infuses her notoriously bombastic lyrics with feminist and social justice mantras. "My music is always going to make a woman feel like a bad bitch. When you make a woman feel like she's the baddest bitch in the room, to me, that's female empowerment," she explains. "But this album is going to be really different. Of course, it's going to have my *Lemonade* moments, my personal relationship moments."

The separation of church and state within her artistry is crystal clear once the rattling bass of Cardi's newest song, "WAP" (read: Wet Ass Pussy), springs forth. Sampling Frank Ski's "Whores in This House," it's a jaw-dropping take on the classic that finds Cardi paying homage to the power between her thighs. Brimming with clever innuendos, swag, and BDE (Big Dick Energy), the rapper ticks off a list of sexual demands for her lover, from being tied up to erotic asphyxiation. Featuring Megan Thee Stallion, the Houston-based "cognac queen" raptress, the new track is a mash-up of chart-topping, sex-positive female rap powerhouses that is bound to start Instagram dance challenges, as well as chatter around Cardi's musicology and the state of female rap.

Other tracks that talk about love and her relationship with her husband, Offset, of rap supergroup Migos, will also prove controversial. Audibly emotional, she says, "I don't really like talking about love much, but I feel like I have to do it, just because I want people to know a little bit. There's always rumors about me and my husband, and I feel like people would rather start rumors because they want me to be heartbroken. They want me to be hurt." A woman's man, she reasons, is her weakness, leaving her vulnerable to both her enemies within the music business and her truest feelings.

She may not blink an eye at bleaching her body hair on camera, but Cardi clams up when discussing her inner emotional world. And she has good reason: Her marriage has made excellent tabloid fodder, with reports of cheating hounding the hip-hop power couple ever since they said "I do" in a 2017 secret ceremony. Whispers allegedly came to a roar with a 2018 dustup at a Queens, New York, strip club between Cardi and two bartending sisters, one of whom the rapper reportedly accused of cheating with her husband; Cardi has been tied up in a legal brouhaha ever since. She has been charged with assault and has pleaded not guilty; the case is pending in Queens Supreme Court. The couple's subsequent breakup played out across social media and the news. Offset wanted her back, Cardi was unfazed, and her rapper husband issued a public mea culpa by surprising her onstage during her Rolling Loud festival performance in the winter of 2018. The public was outraged by the grand gesture, describing his stunt as "toxic masculinity" at its finest: Offset crashing a major moment in his estranged wife's ascending career to redeem himself.

But Cardi took him back, and the couple's effusive displays of love never seem to stop—nor do people's judgments. "I do know that my relationship has a lot of drama and everything. But there's a lot of love, there's a lot of passion, there's a lot of trust, there's a big friendship. It's always us against the world." Rather than continuing to defend her love online, she has saved it for her album, which she says will include a track with Offset. "If you all are so curious to know about my relationship and blah, blah, blah, I'm going to put it in the fuckin' music, and you can buy it, too," she says. "I'm not going to give it to you all for free."

There is much riding on the success of this second album—a project that has stalled for months given COVID and the rapper's need to simply sit with the work. "People haven't seen a music video from me for like eight months, so they're expecting greatness," Cardi says. "And I have to deliver." The lackluster response to her last single, 2019's "Press," rattled her, and she didn't want to put out another video if the creativity had to be hindered due to quarantine. "I didn't really like how my last song performed, so I just got my creativity back," she confesses. "I don't want to just put out a single and have people buy it because I'm Cardi. I want to put out really good music." Referencing Rihanna and Bruno Mars, the rapper explains she finds the value in not rushing the creative process, and tries to ignore the chatter that her spark has fizzled after just three years.

Then there's the matter that she's also reentering music at a time when female rappers are making history by topping the Billboard Hot 100. Doja Cat's "Say So" remix featuring Nicki Minaj shot straight to the top of the charts in May, while Megan Thee Stallion's "Savage (Remix)" featuring Beyoncé quickly followed at number two. Does that inspire a healthy sense of competition in her—or worry that she may not be able to follow suit? Referencing and applying the lessons she learned from the competitive world of stripping, she says she's never been one to compare herself with other artists. "I bring something different. I am me, and that's how I've been since the club," she says. "I know when I get on the stage, I don't give a fuck if the next bitch, or the bitch before me, was better than me. I know I'm going to get my coins. I know I'm bad because I'm different. I do different moves. I got a different bod. So, when these women are teasing everything, it's expected. Don't think that you're going to have all the money in the strip club. Don't think that every man is going to only give you the money. So don't expect you to be the only one who's going to hold number one on the Billboard [charts]. You've got to be confident in your own craft."

> "I don't *give a fuck* if the whole world picks on me.... *Nobody can ever make me quit.*"

Despite her self-awareness, with the world in flux due to the coronavirus and continued social isolation, the path for her next album is uncertain. She's dying to do a tour, but, she wonders, when will the assembly of large crowds be a possibility? Cardi's not quitting, though, that much is for sure. "Ain't no way that I'm going to quit. I don't give a fuck if the whole world picks on me. I don't give a fuck if people make up lies about me every single day. I want to make it really clear that nobody can ever make me quit." Come at her all you want, Cardi refuses to be canceled. ■

Crystal wig, Area. Cuffs, Mordekai by Ken Borochov, $1,350 each. For details, see Shopping Guide.

BEAUTY TIP
Gloss over everything with Pat McGrath Labs Lust: Gloss in Faux Real ($28).

BARDI MEETS BIDEN

As our *nation faces two crises*, COVID-19 and police brutality toward people of color, *Cardi B gets real via Zoom* with the man who could be *our next president.*

CARDI B: *Oh, snap. Is this real?* [*Fanning herself.*] Hi, Biden, how are you?
JOE BIDEN: How are you? The name's Joe.
CB: Well, hello there, Joe.
[*Cardi virtually meets Biden's daughter, Ashley, who is a fan.*]
JB: You know the nickname she gave me when she was growing up? She called me Joey B. So we may be related.
CB: I feel crazy because I'm a little bit late, but let me tell you something: When you have kids, like my two-year-old, your schedule never goes as planned.
JB: You're telling me? I've got four kids, five grandchildren—c'mon, I'm an expert. I understand about kids. The most important thing is, they come first.
CB: Yes, definitely, always. My kid comes first, period. So, Joe, I hear you have some questions for me....
JB: I do have some questions. First of all, I want to congratulate you: The cover of ELLE, that's pretty big-time. Second, thanks for your generosity in dealing with people suffering from COVID. There are so many people who have died needlessly—they didn't have to if we had taken the precautions we needed to. So, thank you. You have a generous heart. Tell me, what's your main interest in this election?
CB: I have a whole list of things that I want our next president to do for us. But first, I just want Trump out. His mouth gets us in trouble so much. I don't want to be lied to—we're dealing with a pandemic right now, and I just want answers. I want to know when this will be over. I want to go back to my job. But I don't want someone to lie to me and tell me that it's fine not to wear a mask, that everything is going to be okay. I want a president to tell me what the steps are for us to get better, to tell me, This is why it is taking so long, this is why other countries are doing better than ours. Tell me the truth, the hard-core truth.

And also: I want free Medicare. It's important to have free [health care], because look at what is happening right now. Of course, I think we need free college. And I want Black people to stop getting killed and no justice for it. I'm sick of it. I just want laws that are fair to Black citizens and fair to cops, too. If you kill somebody who doesn't have a weapon on them, you go to jail. You know what? If I kill somebody, I've got to go to jail. You gotta go to jail, too. That's what I want.
JB: There's no reason why we can't have all of that. Presidents have to take responsibility. I understand one of your favorite presidents is Franklin Roosevelt. Roosevelt said the American people can take anything if you tell them the truth. Sometimes the truth is hard. But right now, we're in a position where we have an opportunity to make so much progress. The American public has had the blinders taken off.
CB: It's so sad that a pandemic had to happen so people could open their eyes and see what type of person they are dealing with. [Trump is] really confusing everyone. One day he's telling them this is nothing, that people need to stop getting tested. Next thing you know, [he has] a mask [on his] face. He's really playing games. And it's crazy that all of this had to happen so they could open their eyes to the past four years.
JB: Well, it doesn't have to happen. In 2016, if 18- to 24-year-olds had voted in the same percentage as the rest of the population, there would have been more votes. We wouldn't have [Trump]; we would have had Hillary Clinton. The vote matters. That's why you keep talking to people about the need to vote. Your generation can own what happens in the next election. They can change things dramatically if they show up and vote. Tell me what your fans are most concerned about?
CB: A lot of fans are concerned about free college and Medicare, especially now that people are getting sick left and right. Sometimes people have problems in their community. For example, a lot of after-school programs that I [had] growing up, no longer exist in my hood. Why?
JB: That's why I ask what they want me to do. I'm the guy who put in those after-school programs. I was able to get $20 billion [for] more Boys & Girls Clubs. But what happened? Everything was getting better—this was when crime was going down—so [people said], "We don't have to pay for this anymore." They didn't want to pay the taxes for it. And that's why this [notion that] "Government is bad" has been such a downer for things that really matter to you and me.

When my wife and daughter were killed [in a car accident], I suddenly became a single dad to my two surviving sons, and I couldn't afford child care. I didn't have the money for someone to take care of my kids. Thank God, I had my sister and my brother and my mother, who helped me. But look at all the people who don't have that kind of help.
CB: I'm always so focused on Medicare and college education, and I never really thought about how important child care is. Nobody is more motivated than a mom. Nobody wants to go hustle out there and get the money for the kid like a mother. [But] how are you supposed to do that when you probably can't afford a babysitter? Fortunately for me, my mom helps take care of my child, but for a lot of people, their mom cannot retire and take care of the kids. The mom has to work, too.

I feel like this country is so hurt, to the point that this year, a lot of people couldn't even celebrate July 4, because not everybody feels like an American. A lot of people feel like [they're] not even part of America.
JB: Absolutely. One of the things that I admire about you is that you keep talking about what I call equity—decency, fairness, and treating people with respect. John Lewis, one of the great civil rights leaders [who tragically passed away just as this issue was going to press], used to say: The vote is the most powerful nonviolent tool you have. Look, I'm a lot older than you, to state the obvious. When I was in high school, the civil rights movement was just being started, and along came Bull Connor and his

BIDEN AND CARDI B SCREENSHOTS: COURTESY OF BIDEN FOR PRESIDENT (2).

dogs. He thought he was going to drive a wooden stake into the heart of the civil rights movement. But when all those folks saw what was happening in the South—[when] they saw Bull Connor with dogs [attacking] elderly Black women going to church, and kids being knocked down with fire hoses—all of a sudden, as Dr. King said, we had the second emancipation. We had the Voting Rights Act and we had the Civil Rights Act. It changed things because people said, "Oh my God, that's happening." [Today], the cell phone has changed America. Because we're at a point where some brave kid can stand there for a total of 8 minutes and 46 seconds and take a [video] of a Black man [being] brutally murdered. And people around the world are saying, "My God. This really happens?" And now they're demanding change.

CB: And you know, I feel like Black people, we're not asking for sympathy, we're not asking for charity—we are just asking for equality. We are asking for fairness, and we are asking for justice. That is all. I feel like everything people are asking for is getting interpreted in a very different way. No, it's simple: We just want justice. We want to feel like Americans.

JB: Well, I'll tell you what. I have a friend in Mississippi, Bennie Thompson, a very well-known congressman, an African American. He called me two weeks ago. He said, "Joe, I just came from a protest. There were as many white kids marching as Black kids. This is Mississippi, Joe. Things are changing." The reason I'm so optimistic is because of your generation. You're the smartest, the best educated, the least prejudiced, and the most engaged generation in history. And you're going to change things. I really mean it! I'm not trying to be nice. And by the way, the rest of the world has always looked to us. Why? Not because we're so powerful. But [because of] the power of our example. Look what they're seeing now with this president. He's promoting hatred, prejudice, racism. Talking about protecting the Confederate flag when Mississippi takes it off their flag. This is all about making people hate each other. Because that's how he wins, by dividing us. Your generation is changing it.

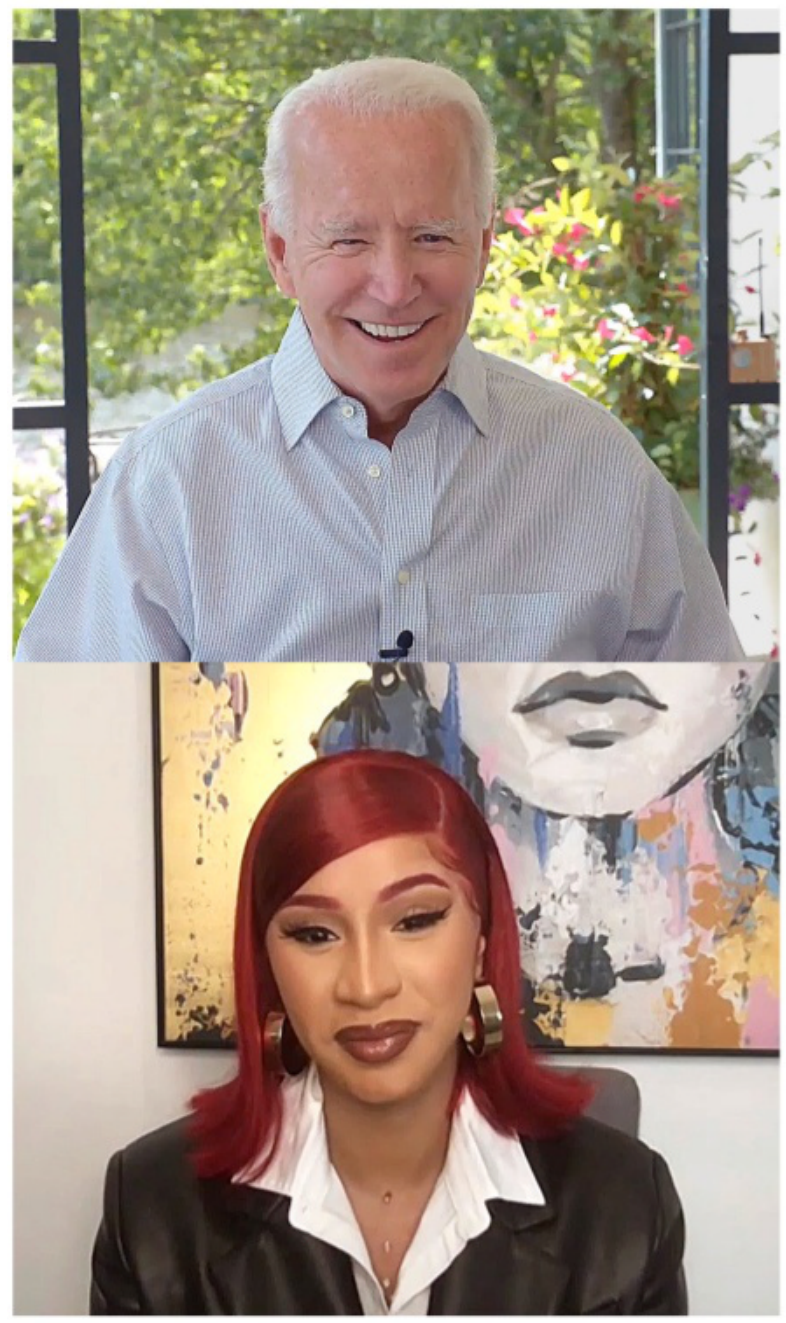
CB: That's so powerful. I feel like I learned a lot, and it's just been 10 minutes. And it's true—that's why I want the new generation, my fans, my people to go out and vote. I know we are so eager to make money, to look a certain way, to have style, celebrity gossip. But it's like, Why don't we make a change for real and vote?

JB: In the primaries, they kept saying, "Well, you know, there aren't that many people voting; Biden's not going to excite anybody." We had [some of] the largest turnout in the primaries ever. People are ready. And let me tell you something: The American people have never, ever let their country down. They've been battered by this president and the way he continues to divide [our communities]. He appeals to their prejudice. He spews hate. We've gotta stop it.

CB: And you know, this prejudice is dangerous. It could be the start of a civil war. It makes people feel uncomfortable around different people. Nobody wants to feel targeted. Nobody wants animosity. Everybody just wants the best for themselves, their future, their kids' future. I don't want to [have to] tell my kid, "You have to be careful going to the store. Don't wear a hoodie. Please don't get stopped." We don't want that. And I don't want to feel a certain type of animosity toward a different race, because I feel like they get it easier than us. Nobody wants to feel like that. Why can't we just work with each other?

JB: We can.

CB: Racism has always existed. But I feel like right now, there's just a lot of tension. And we need somebody to clean that up. I'm just so tired of it.



Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden Zooming with Cardi B in July.

JB: Also, by the way, if I get elected president, anybody with a family [that makes] less than 125 grand, you're going to get free education. And everybody gets free community college.

CB: Do you think that's going to be able to happen?

JB: Absolutely, positively.

CB: Because let me tell you about my college experience. I'm from New York, and when you're in high school or middle school, they give you a free MetroCard for you to be able to get to your school, and they gave me free lunch. When I was in college, I didn't get any more [free] transportation. So I had to get a job, because I needed $5 every single day to be able to go from Washington Heights to Chambers Street. And I had to feed myself. Sometimes I had to wait from 1 p.m. all the way to 9 p.m. to get home to eat. Because I couldn't afford McDonald's or any restaurants on my break. I was starving, and I felt so discouraged. So I just feel like that is so important, to finance students while they're in college.

But what a lot of people are concerned about is, If the government gives us [these things], are they going to raise our taxes? Because clearly nobody wants to pay so much in taxes. Sometimes, when my taxes come in, I'm like, *"Oh my gosh, I'm depressed, oh Lord, let me see my Birkin collection."* That is a little joke. [But] when you see the taxes coming off your check, you don't understand, because you feel like you're putting in so many hours. People want to know, Can you provide college education, this [health care] plan, without a big chunk of taxes coming out of our checks?

JB: Yes, we can. And the way we can pay for all of this is doing practical things, like making sure that everybody has to pay their fair share. [For example] no corporation should pay less than 15 percent tax.

[*A staffer cuts in to say their time is coming to an end.*]

JB: Thank you for your willingness to help. I'll make mistakes as president, but I'll admit to the mistakes I make, and you're never going to have to wonder whether I'll keep my word.

CB: I would like to see [that]!

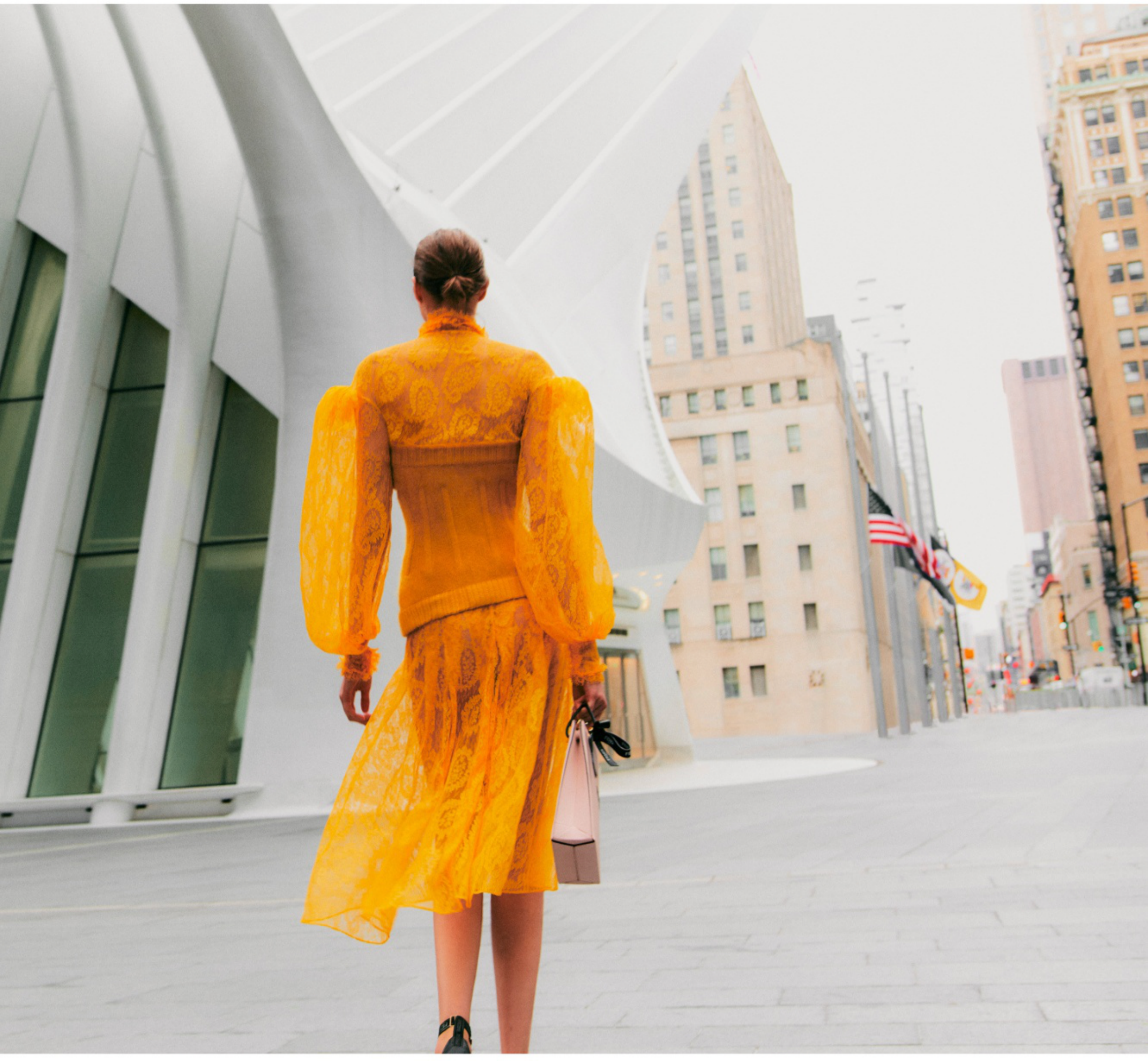
JB: Just check me out; I've never broken my word. Never in my life. ■

L I V I N G

ALONG THE QUIET, QUARANTINED STREETS OF NEW YORK CITY, FALL'S MOST VIVID ENSEMBLES REFUSE TO BE SILENCED.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY CHRIS COLLS. STYLED BY ALEX WHITE.

O U T L O U D



FULTON AND CHURCH STREETS, MANHATTAN

Shirt, $2,290, bustier top, $950, skirt, $2,100, handbag, $2,190, pumps, Fendi.

INGRAHAM STREET, BROOKLYN

Polo dress, bodysuit, skirt, handbag, $9,550, boots, $2,500, Hermès. Hat, Clyde, $248. Sunglasses, Alain Mikli x Jeremy Scott, $294. Necklace, Vram, $9,600.

INGRAHAM STREET, BROOKLYN

Bow sleeve, dress, $3,260, gloves, handbag, Mary Janes, $1,195, Maison Margiela.

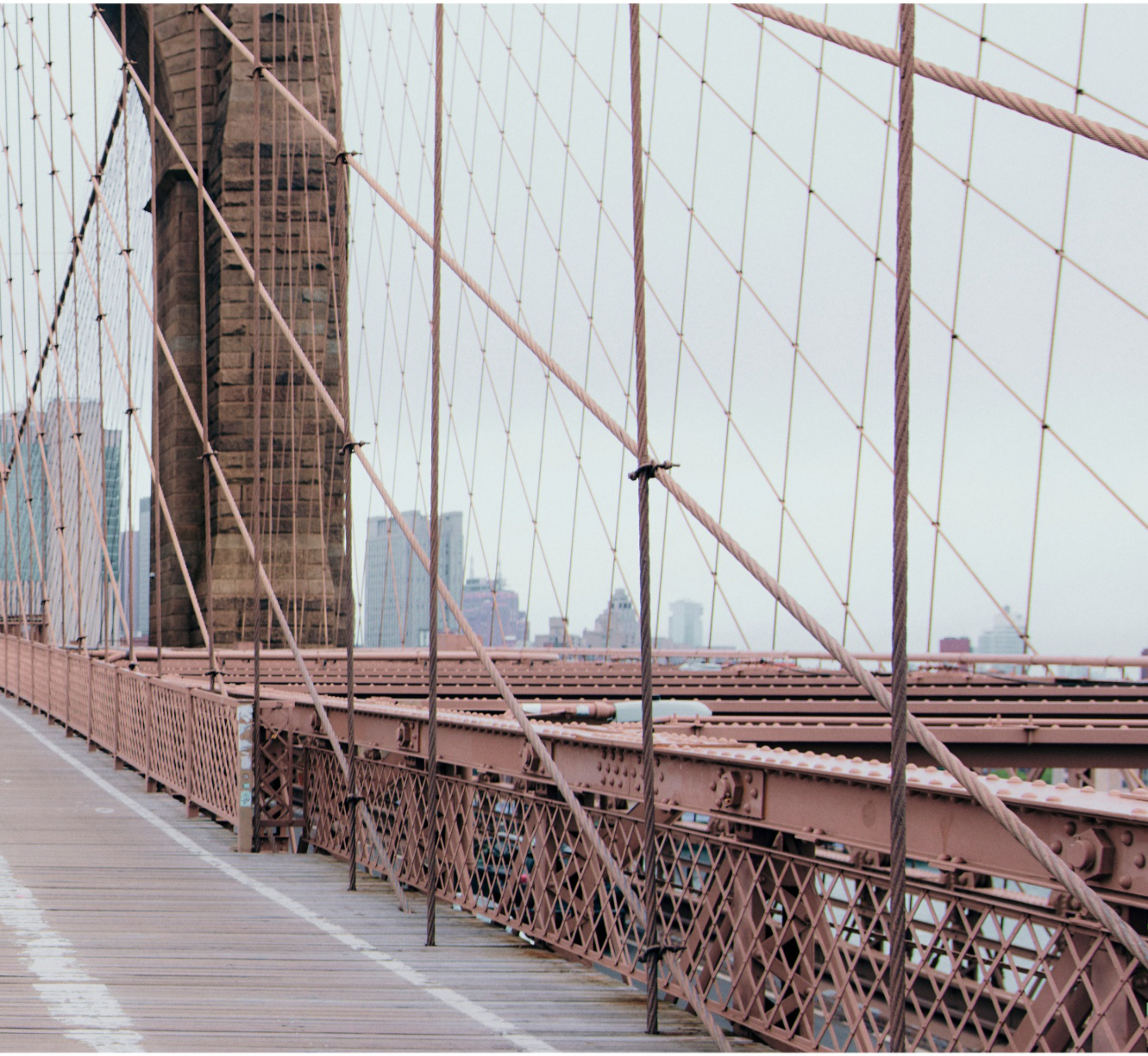
INGRAHAM STREET, BROOKLYN

Trench coat, top, pants, ankle boots, $2,050, Louis Vuitton. Earrings, Vram, $2,400.

TIMES SQUARE, MANHATTAN

Dress, $3,350, handbag, $1,950, slingbacks, $850, Miu Miu.

Scarf, $750, turtleneck, $980, skirt, $2,220, Givenchy.



BROOKLYN BRIDGE

INGRAHAM STREET, BROOKLYN

Jacket, $2,320, dress, $510, tights, $150, handbag, $420, shoes, $1,070, Junya Watanabe Comme des Garçons.

INGRAHAM STREET, BROOKLYN

Coat, $4,550, shirt, $920, skirt, $1,980, sunglasses, tie, $215, belt, bracelet, $1,150, handbag, Prada. Mary Janes, Maison Margiela, $1,195.

INGRAHAM STREET, BROOKLYN

Top, $1,200, skirt, $1,200, stockings, $190, glasses, choker, $840, bracelets, handbag, $1,850, pumps, $950, Gucci.

COLLISTER STREET, MANHATTAN

Dress, $6,400, pumps, $1,200, Loewe.

MERCER STREET, MANHATTAN

Trench coat, $5,550, handbag, $2,490, boots, $2,250, Balenciaga. Sunglasses, Oliver Peoples, $432.

HAIR BY WARD AT THE WALL GROUP; MAKEUP BY FULVIA FAROLFI FOR CHANEL; CASTING BY STEFANIE STEIN CASTING; MODELS: ALEXANDRA AGOSTON AT IMG, AMBAR CRISTAL AT NEXT MODELS, AWUOR DIT AT RED MODEL MANAGEMENT, VAUGHAN OLLIER AT APM MODELS, AND TAMI WILLIAMS AT THE SOCIETY MANAGEMENT.

INGRAHAM STREET, BROOKLYN

Blazer, $3,390, blouse, $1,790, leggings, $890, belt, $870, gloves, $495, handbag, $4,900, Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello. For details, see Shopping Guide.

BELLA b y Gigi

Photographed by Gigi Hadid.
Styled by Alex White.

Sheltering at their family farm, the Hadid sisters return to their equestrian roots—with Gigi stepping behind the camera.

OPPOSITE PAGE:
Bodysuit, $2,175, choker, breeches, $1,075, Hermès.

THIS PAGE:
Coat, $2,395, top, $595, gloves, Versace. Pants, competition boots, $1,350, mini chaps, $1,125, Hermès.

Blazer, $3,590, blouse, $1,790, leggings, $890, Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello. Boots, Hunter, $150.

BEAUTY TIP
A subtle, dewy flush—like the one from Diorskin Nude Luminizer Shimmering Glow Powder in Pink Glow ($48)—flatters every skin tone.

MODEL: BELLA HADID AT IMG.

OPPOSITE PAGE:
Sweater, $8,350, pants, $4,000, cuffs, $2,050, Chanel. Boots, Hunter, $150.

BEAUTY TIP
Dior Prestige La Micro-Huile de Rose ($260) will give you petal-soft, glowing skin.

THIS PAGE:
Dress, scarf, Dior. Hat, Clyde, $284. Gloves, Versace. Competition boots, $1,350, mini chaps, $1,125, Hermès. For details, see Shopping Guide.

THIS PAGE:
Bustier bodysuit, $2,690, belt, $575, leggings, $890, earrings, $595, bracelet, $595, handbags, $1,890–$2,690 each, slingbacks, $875, Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello.

OPPOSITE PAGE:
Jacket, belt, Tod's. Gown, Erdem, $6,740.

Destination

Anywhere

Turning a New York apartment into her stage, model Jordan Daniels embraces the transportive powers of fashion in some of fall's most dramatic looks.

Photographed by Matthew Kristall.
Styled by Rebecca Dennett.

Dress, Oscar de la Renta, $7,290. Earrings, Bulgari, $2,750. Boots, Proenza Schouler, $995.

Dress, $6,250, belt, $650, Etro. Earrings, $595, pumps, $845, Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello. Ring, Dries Van Noten.

Tank, $760, skirt, Salvatore Ferragamo. Earrings, $2,750, ring, $8,650, Bulgari.

BEAUTY TIP
Hold your hairstyle and lock in shine with Maui Moisture Thicken & Restore + Bamboo Fibers Blow Out Mist ($8).

Blouse, $3,290, pants, $1,690, Ralph Lauren Collection. Gloves, Manokhi, $350.

Dress, Alberta Ferretti, $6,695.

BEAUTY TIP
The subtle sheen and lush hydration of Sisley-Paris Phyto-Lip Twist tinted lip balm in Nude ($50) are fit for a luxurious afternoon in bed.

Skirt, $5,200, shorts, $2,700, earrings (worn in hair), $700, necklace, $1,850, handbags, $3,000–$4,200 each, Chanel.

Jacket, $3,100, Bermuda tuxedo shorts, $890, blouse, $1,500, bow tie, $220, clutch, $2,950, Celine by Hedi Slimane.

Dress, bra, brief, Dolce & Gabbana.

Top, Max Mara, $1,290. Bralette, $76, panty, $41, Love Stories. Boots, Halpern x Christian Louboutin.

Top, $555, tights, $495, bracelet, handbags, pumps, Prada. For details, see Shopping Guide.

Air Jordan

The globe-trotting model has been using self-isolation to stay creative—and politically engaged.

Jordan Daniels is on the ferry when we speak, the tooting of tugboats and sound of rushing water punctuating our conversation. Doing an interview while in transit seems appropriate for the model, who has spent her life moving between continents. Born in South Africa, Daniels grew up in New Zealand, where she enrolled in college and took a retail job. It was "a normal life," she recalls. Then she upended that normalcy, jettisoning her studies to head to L.A. in hopes of taking her modeling career to the next level. "I didn't ask my parents for permission or anything—I just did it," she says. The risk paid off. After she notched an exclusive booking for Prada's spring 2019 show, Daniels has since walked a marathon's worth of runways, from Dior to Marc Jacobs to Thom Browne. All that travel helped spur an interest in international cuisine. "It was one of the ways that I would get to know a city," she says. Her dream is to have her own Anthony Bourdain–style travel show someday, focused on food and culture.

In self-isolation, Daniels has been getting creative with remote shoots. "I've glued crystals on my teeth," she says, and incorporated her dogs and cats into the background of her shots. She's been staying politically engaged, working with Starfish Greathearts Foundation, which supports children in HIV/AIDS-affected communities in South Africa, and she's been active in the Black Lives Matter movement, helping to provide supplies to protesters. And she's given thought to how the fashion industry can be more inclusive when it comes to Black models like herself. To Daniels, that means investing in their careers long-term. "At the end of the day, new faces are, unfortunately, disposable," she says. "It's all about longevity."—VÉRONIQUE HYLAND

HAIR BY NICOLE NELMS; MAKEUP BY CHIAO-LI FOR CHANEL; PRODUCED BY HILLARY FOXWELDON.

Shore Leave

The *subdued palette* of a *deserted beach* in New York's Montauk provides a captivating backdrop for *the season's coziest knits*.

Photographed by Terence Connors. Styled by Charles Varenne.

Sweater, Giorgio Armani, $2,795. Briefs, The Knotty Ones, $84.

Cardigan, $4,790, turtleneck, $1,150, Ralph Lauren Collection.
Bikini bottom, Polo Ralph Lauren, $64.

Jacket, $8,095, top, $1,345, shorts, $1,345, scarf, $1,645, Dolce & Gabbana. Boots, Isabel Marant, $2,150.

BEAUTY TIP
A two-for-one sunscreen and primer, Chantecaille Ultra Sun Protection Sunscreen Broad Spectrum SPF 45 Primer ($95) is the convertible of your beauty routine.

Romper, $1,900, belt, $320, Miu Miu.

Turtleneck, $1,490, knit scarf, $990, Michael Kors Collection.

Cardigan, knit top, shorts, Dior.

BEAUTY TIP
Virtue Labs Texturizing Spray ($18) shields hair from UV damage and leaves it effortlessly beachy.

Sweaters, $745 each, beanie, $225, Max Mara.

MODEL: ZIPPORA SEVEN AT IMG.

Sweater, $3,700, handbag, $5,800, boots, $1,800, Chanel.
Knit briefs, Hesperios, $150. For details, see Shopping Guide.

2020 VISION

THE STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED THIS SUMMER have never faced a more uncertain future. As they navigated the new quarantine normal, we invited college photography graduates from around the country to showcase their skills in the form of fashion images. The models were their nearest and dearest—parents, roommates, siblings, significant others—who were excited to don high fashion for this shoot. For Parsons grad Daveed Baptiste, it was a chance to pay tribute to his mother, Marie. After he immigrated to the U.S. from Haiti, the two were separated for years, but they've now reconnected in New York, where she works as a home health aide. "She was going to work almost every day," he recalls. "I wanted to make her feel special, so one afternoon after she came home from work, I asked if I could photograph her for this issue." NYU's Anna Betts enlisted her quarantine pod to bring her images to life. "Being able to photograph these clothes gave me the confidence to think outside the box," she says of her first-ever fashion shoot. Given the richness of this talent pool, we don't think it'll be the last.

Curated and styled by Alex White.

NI OUYANG,
FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

@ROTTEN_AVOCADOO

"As an immigrant and a dual-cultured artist, I aim to tell diverse stories," Ouyang says. "I chose to shoot with an Asian model at a location that carried my original fantasy of the American landscape: on a sunset-bathed Coney Island beach, a figure that is defined by the hyperbolic design in an empty seashore. There is a relationship between substance and void."

Blouse, skirt, headpiece, Rodarte.

GABRIELLA SPIEGEL, FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

@GABRIELLASPIEGEL

Spiegel shot this image in her Long Island hometown, with her sister Alexa serving as her model. "I wanted to create a fashion image that still had some sort of narrative," she says. "I went about taking this photo as if I were creating a film still, and I directed my model to stare longingly off into the seemingly isolated and secluded landscape."

Trench cape jacket, $2,590, skirt, $1,390, handbag, $1,650, Michael Kors Collection.

DAVEED BAPTISTE, PARSONS

@DAVEEDBAPTISTE

Baptiste chose his mother, Marie, a home health aide, as his model. In his native Haiti, "it's natural to see farm animals mingle with city life, like a chicken running through traffic. For this shoot with my mother, I wanted to bring that same energy to Brooklyn," he says. "When the shoot was over, she wanted to keep all the pieces. She wanted everything."

Dress, Gucci, $3,980. Her own sandals.

GRACE KIM, SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS

@GRACEYENKIM

"When photographing models, I like to immerse them in nature," Kim says. "I grew up in Palisades Park, New Jersey, and I think greenery and foliage just bring peace and comfort to anyone. I see the outdoors as nature's sculptures, so I thought it would be interesting to incorporate fashion and a subject into a quiet, green suburban landscape."

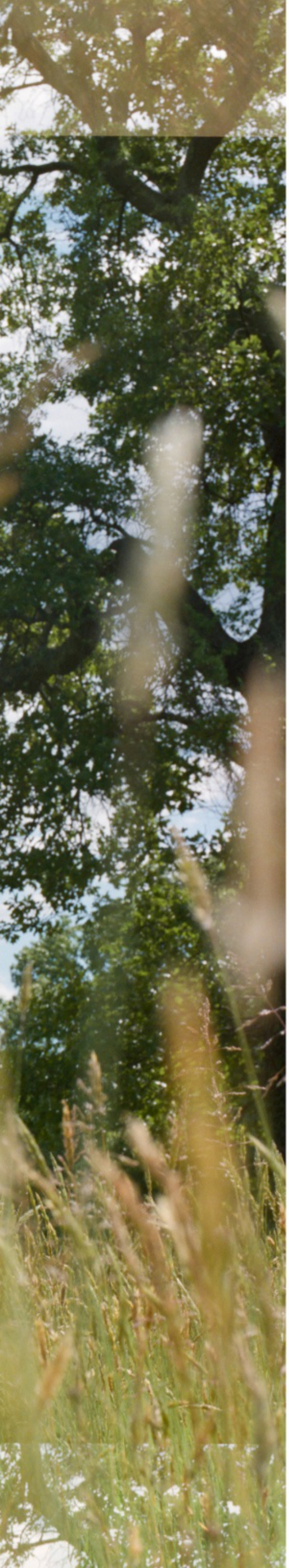
Shirt, skirt, Giorgio Armani.

HEATHER SUAREZ, SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS

@FUNKYBABYGURL

"I was lucky to be quarantined with my best friend, Lu Carter," says Suarez, who captured this image in New York's Madison Square Park during the height of the pandemic. "We've both channeled our inner child during uncertain times, and I've coped with it creatively by reverting to my adolescence."

Sweater, Gabriela Hearst, $1,990.



LUCY BORDEN, FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

@LUCYMBORDEN

"I'm from the most beautiful place in California," says Borden, who grew up in Mill Valley and spent a lot of time outdoors. "I didn't realize how much I took for granted, but being in quarantine really solidified my feeling of being disconnected with nature. Constantly shooting in a studio in New York City feels so cold, unnatural, and stale, so I went to the Jersey Shore."

On Cyndal McKay, left: Dress, $1,785, pants, $705, Sacai. On Christel Langué, right: Sweater, $1,990, skirt, $2,990, Akris.

ELLEN SHUAN, NYU/TISCH

@ELLENSAART

"I chose my friend Katherine Kamin, whom I've known since high school, to be my model," Shuan says. The two love going on "explorations and adventures around the Bay Area," including the Palace of Fine Arts, a favorite haunt. "Sometimes we'd go out to take photos of each other. I decided to choose her as a model so it would feel just like old times."

Dress, $1,730, necklace, $595, platforms, $1,080, Moschino Couture.

KILLIAN NELSON, FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

@KILLYNELSON

"My focus in my work often relates back to ideas of mental health, queerness, intimacy, gender, and identity," says NYC native Nelson, who chose their girlfriend Jolie as their subject. "For me, photography has been cathartic in understanding my own self and identity, as well as working through trauma, and I feel it is important to create representation for people who are often left unseen."

Raincoat, $2,285, hat, scarf, gloves, $880, handbag, $1,455, knit socks, $270, Maison Margiela.

EMMANUELLE GLAZIER, SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS

@EMMANUELLEGLAZIER

"I like my work to have a timeless, painterly aesthetic," says Glazier, whose work is inspired by Renaissance paintings, surrealism, and Roman sculpture. For this portrait, shot in her New York apartment, "I imagined a woman lost in her thoughts as she explores a grand world around her. She could be from another era or today; the experience is the same."

Blouse, $3,995, shorts, $1,145, handbag, $2,945, Dolce & Gabbana.

GUS ARONSON,
BARD COLLEGE

@GUSSELSPROUT

"My practice for the most part centers around the convergence of information, fiction, and history," says Aronson, who photographed his friends Aurora and Henry near his alma mater's campus in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. "I believe that pictures don't depict history or a moment in time, but rather challenge it. They act as a road map for the future. They are tarot cards in a sense, informing how we subsequently see the world and the next [set of] pictures."

On him: Jacket, $4,650, shirt, $1,100, Celine by Hedi Slimane. On her: Coat, $3,250, shirt, $1,950, skirt, $2,950, Celine by Hedi Slimane.

ANGELICA NEGRON, NYU/TISCH

@ANGELICAS.PHOTOS_

Negron chose to depict her friend Veronica, a nonbinary student sheltering in place in a van after feeling unwelcome at home. For this portrait, shot in Harriman State Park, Negron asked herself, "How can one stay at home when home is not a welcoming place?" She adds, "I know the hardships Veronica faces are not unique, and I hope to bring light to the issues so many are experiencing during this unprecedented time."

Dress, $2,025, pumps, $785, Stella McCartney.

ANNA BETTS, NYU/TISCH

@ANNABETTS

Her aunt and uncle's Chelsea architecture studio served as Betts's makeshift set. She shot her fellow 2020 grad Annalisa Garofalo there, with assistance from her friend Sam Delaney and boyfriend Kevin Ford, also in the NYU class of 2020. Having her quarantine group with her "made the whole project more personal, fun, and exciting," Betts says. "I was able to share this moment with them."

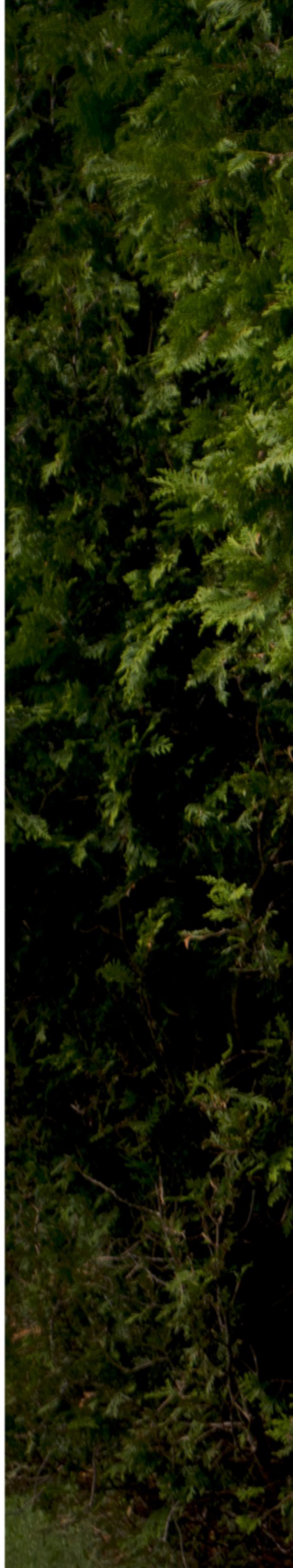
Dress, Valentino. Gloves, Valentino Garavani, $695. Mules, Jimmy Choo, $550.

ERIN WANG, RISD

@ERIN_WYY

Wang started out as a landscape architecture student before finding her true medium. "Photography is the interface where my inside and outside worlds meet," she says. For this image, she photographed her roommate in Rhode Island's Colt State Park. "The girl running into or being devoured by another world visually describes my transition between the two."

Dress, Gucci, $4,800. For details, see Shopping Guide.



KATIE PORTER IS ALL OF US

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 153

badass, strutting out of shutdown negotiations at the White House in a Max Mara coat, Porter was blown away—but not for the reason most people were: "I love that photo, but it wasn't lost on me that that turns out to be a $3,000 coat," she says. "Never in my life will I own a $3,000 coat. [Pelosi] said she wore it that day because it was clean. Well, all my laundry could be done, and there wouldn't be any item in my closet that costs more than a couple hundred dollars."

She felt the divide on the campaign trail, too. Her now-colleague Representative Gil Cisneros, a Democrat from the district north of hers who was also elected in 2018, won a $266 Mega Millions jackpot in 2010 and spent $9 million on his campaign. "That's a really different experience than I had, where I remember just crying because I didn't want to ask my friends for more money because I just didn't know if they had it," Porter says.

At first, she tried to look the part of a fancy lady running for Congress after a staffer told her that pulling her hair back in a ponytail every day wouldn't get her elected. He sent her for a haircut, and "I came out looking like Nancy Pelosi," Porter says. "It was just impossible. I have really curly hair, and I do not get a blowout every day at the Four Seasons or whatever." She would spend precious time trying to tame unruly strands, thinking, "Do you have to have straight hair to help the American people?"

She hired a new campaign manager, Erica Kwiatkowski, who got it. When she found out Porter loathed straightening her hair, "we went to the salon and chopped it all off, and that took 30 minutes off her day," Kwiatkowski says. It was one of many adjustments from the norm they made together to compensate for Porter being a different kind of candidate. "She is relentlessly who she is, and she is not going to change, nor should she, for this world," Kwiatkowski adds.

And who is Porter? A middle-class mom who dresses like Batgirl when she votes on an impeachment inquiry because it also happens to be Halloween. A former Cub Scout leader who goes on Showtime's *Desus & Mero* and complains about "bitches" who make fun of her minivan. A congresswoman who wants to start a "straight shooter" caucus for members who tell it like it is. "You have to be scrappy—as a working mom, a single mom, and as someone who doesn't have wealth and all these advantages. You have to fight to be taken seriously," she says. "That is even true in Congress, and I wasn't prepared for it."

During our third Zoom call, Porter quite literally stumbles on a prop of sorts that inadvertently helps make her case. She's speaking to me from her yard, and at one point stops abruptly. "Hang on. You're going to love this...I stepped in dog poo," she says, taking off one green Converse and flashing it to the camera. "I just think there are a lot of my colleagues who would never admit that they ever—in their whole life—stepped in dog poo. And it's like, Who hasn't? I don't think we get anywhere trying to separate ourselves from the American people." ■

ANN CURRY STILL DOESN'T KNOW WHY SHE WAS OUSTED

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 161

and went on to work on new shows for other networks: PBS's *We'll Meet Again*, about people who've been separated by historical catastrophes and then reunited; and TNT and TBS's *Chasing the Cure*, about Americans with mystery illnesses. Curry says she's been approached by cable stations with offers to return to news reporting, but she's never found good reason to do so. Instead, she's pouring her energy into smaller, self-directed projects. She speaks at universities; she contributes to *National Geographic*; she's doing research for a book.

Suddenly, Curry interrupts our conversation to return to an earlier topic. "I feel I skirted your question, and I don't like to do that," she says. "I think because of how I was feeling, I didn't answer directly. You asked me how I look back on the show. I was feeling deeply, and I needed a moment.

"The bottom line is that it still hurts," she says. "It honestly hurts really deeply, because I really think I did nothing wrong. But in spite of the pain of it, which still lingers, I know that I contributed to some people suffering less.

"But I tell you, it was tough," she adds. "It was hard to walk that line, to not add more [suffering]. Boy, oh boy, was it tough."

Given how the world has changed since our walk, it feels important to check in with Curry over the phone. When I reach her in late March, mid-shutdown, she sounds invigorated. She's been digging through the mountains of information about COVID-19, and right now she's amped about a piece she read on DIY ventilators. "I tweeted that to Donald Trump, to Vice President Pence, to Macron in France, to Boris Johnson in England, and said: 'Hey! FYI. You should be thinking about this,'" she says. "Look, I don't know if any of them are reading my tweets. There is a way to participate in helping people. It's not just me because I'm a journalist. It's all of us."

Once again, I'm reminded that a veteran news anchor, who's done some of the more important on-the-ground reporting in places like Darfur, Afghanistan, and Syria, is now a card-carrying member of...the peanut gallery. I remember the metaphor she used over lunch, of having to be like water between rocks, when talking about her time at *Today*. If anything, maybe she can identify what those rocks are, I prompt her. "I mean, it's been eight years, right? And I think at this point, after all that's been said and done, it just feels unhelpful, and potentially hurtful, to talk about this. I would say that we all know, especially we women, we know what those rocks are." For many women, a nondisclosure agreement is a big one. "It's a rock for a lot of people," she says. "But I decided a long time ago that I don't care about that. My biggest concern is not hurting others at the moment. Helping but not hurting—that's the water between rocks."

I ask about the "climate of verbal sexual harassment" she's mentioned in earlier interviews. "Are you asking me if I've ever been verbally sexually harassed? Yeah, of course. Who hasn't? It's still going on in many places, and it was going on where I worked."

Then I ask Curry the question that's been weighing on me since our first conversation: Does she believe that her decision to warn NBC executives about Lauer had something to do with her firing? I expect her to dismiss this inquiry or offer a vague, NDA-compliant line about how all workplaces are inherently complicated. Instead, she allows herself a confession. "I still don't really understand it," she says. "If I had known what was happening in the back rooms of power, then I would know. I obviously was not in those rooms."

There is a general consensus that #MeToo brought many misdeeds to light, a lot of truth into the open. But in the movement's wake is a host of new questions for women: Did speaking up help me, or harm me? Did this situation change my career path? Did I help the situation, or did I hurt it? Did I do too much, or not enough? "I think that many people have guessed why [I was replaced], but I've held myself back," Curry says. "I've asked people why, and I haven't gotten a good answer."

But despite the questions that linger in her career, Curry is sure of one thing. "I have no regrets about how I've behaved," she says. "And I'm very proud, in spite of everything, of all the work I was able to achieve." She pauses for a beat. "I don't really think about it very often; I really don't. But when I do, it does hurt still, because it takes time to heal. But what I've learned is that you rise stronger." ■

Shopping Guide

DRESS, CHRISTOPHER JOHN ROGERS. SHOES, JUNYA WATANABE COMME DES GARÇONS, $1,070.

CARDI B COVER
Dress by Atelier Versace, 212-317-0224. Wig by Area, area.nyc. Cuff by Mordekai by Ken Corochov, $1,350, mordekai.com.

BELLA HADID COVER
Blazer, $3,590, blouse, $1,790, by Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello, Saint Laurent (NYC).

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CHRIS COLLS

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Horoscope

"I felt the duty to help, so I've donated the proceeds from several pieces to Doctors Without Borders, and I've been working nonstop with Project Ovo, my nonprofit in Brazil. I have faith in the future."—*Ana Khouri*

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VIRGO
AUG 23–SEPT 22

September's mission: building powerful partnerships without losing yourself in the process. The full moon on the 2nd reveals where you might be losing energy by making too many sacrifices. Pull back and reflect on this: What would make you feel happy and whole, Virgo? A clear vision could come by the annual Virgo new moon on the 17th. Pampering yourself, performing onstage, and taking on a powerful role could all be part of your pathway to bliss.

LIBRA
SEPT 23–OCT 22

Surrender, Libra. A situation you're dying to fix is beyond your control—at least until birthday season begins on the 23rd. With the Sun in your hazy twelfth house until then, you can't get a clear read on anyone's motives. No need to abandon the ones you love; create space for them to move forward without feeling pressure to reciprocate your generosity. Finances stabilize after the 12th, as Jupiter corrects course, possibly evoking inspiration for a home-based business.

SCORPIO
OCT 23–NOV 21

This September offers you the opportunity to think collaboratively. As the Sun sails through your visionary zone, you'll find ways to draw people together for shared success. On the 2nd, the full moon brings a shining moment to unleash your creativity—and your powers of seduction. But don't rush that vibe: A promising partnership may hover in the friend zone before revealing its full potential mid-November. This month, the greatest romance may be with your career. Lose track of time honing your craft!

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 22–DEC 21

Career initiatives take flight, pulling you in and out of the public eye. With Mars turning retrograde on the 9th, slip behind the scenes to develop an ambitious project that could bring fame after November 13. The red planet's reversal could create friction, even upheaval, in romance. This shake-up will force you to get real about what you desire—even if it doesn't fit the cookie-cutter fantasy of what love is supposed to be.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22–JAN 19

Widen your search radius. You'll find opportunity far from home, whether you board a plane or connect to colleagues virtually. (With Mars turning retrograde on the 9th, your local circle might be too distracted to step in.) Fortunately, Jupiter, then Saturn, end retrogrades and power forward in your sign on the 12th and 29th. By the time September ends, you'll feel clear about what's best for you and empowered to make a move in an uncharted direction.

AQUARIUS
JAN 20–FEB 18

You'll need to keep a low profile to accomplish all that you have on deck this month. Until the 22nd, you may do your best work after hours. As Mars turns retrograde on the 9th, you may feel like taking a breather from social media and beaming your focus toward a few special souls. And with Venus getting cozy in your relationship house after the 6th, you could deepen one bond in a sexy way.

PISCES
FEB 19–MAR 20

You may not be 100 percent comfortable basking in the spotlight, but you could find yourself there on the 2nd, thanks to the annual full moon in Pisces. As you share your gifts, you'll attract partners who can help you actualize your dream. Pursuing a former income stream could prove lucrative after the 9th, so reach out to past coworkers. A healthy relationship emerges near the new moon on the 17th—especially if you've been taking care of yourself.

ARIES
MAR 21–APR 19

If your energy is scattered, Aries, simplify your plan. You can't afford to feel drained, particularly after the 9th, when your ruler, energizer Mars, turns retrograde in your sign until November 13. This slowed-down cycle brings you the ability to focus on what really moves the needle. Libra season kicks off on the 23rd, a time to enlist project partners. You'll have to share the profits, but you'll hit new heights when you're sharing the load.

TAURUS
APR 20–MAY 20

As the Sun beams through your eminent fifth house until the 22nd, you'll need to grab the reins. Under your capable command, a long-overdue cleanup mission will finally get underway. Releasing emotional baggage and cutting toxic ties feels essential now, since Mars will be backing up through your twelfth house of transitions from September 9 to November 13. Romantically, you might start "playing house" with someone new after the 6th or, if attached, curating a love nest with your boo.

GEMINI
MAY 21–JUNE 21

Reclaim your time and space, Gemini! Relationships are ready to be rebalanced this month, but that will require you to draw inward and honor your need for reflective private time. The full moon on the 2nd could bring a career milestone or increased responsibility at work. Friction in a friend group could also erupt after the 9th. Turn your focus toward a few worthy people—including a long-distance connection—who can match your level of intimacy.

CANCER
JUNE 22–JULY 22

Channel your vision to cut through the power struggles. With the Sun in your expressive third house until the 22nd, your bottled-up thoughts are ready to be put into words. Write manuals, workshop ideas with the hive mind, and train people in your best practices. While the extra tasks might stall production temporarily, you'll make up for lost time. A key relationship reignites after the 12th, but wait until the 29th before determining the best roles and structure for everyone.

LEO
JULY 23–AUG 22

Balancing finances doesn't have to spell deprivation, Leo. Tighten your belt appropriately while keeping your eye on earning opportunities. A promising gig could land in your lap by the new moon on the 17th. With Mars in reverse from September 9 to November 13, online classes could prepare you for a profitable new path. Venus grooves into Leo on the 6th, jump-starting a four-week romantic renaissance. Make time for creative pursuits—along with people who fill your love tank.

By the AstroTwins, Tali and Ophira Edut

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